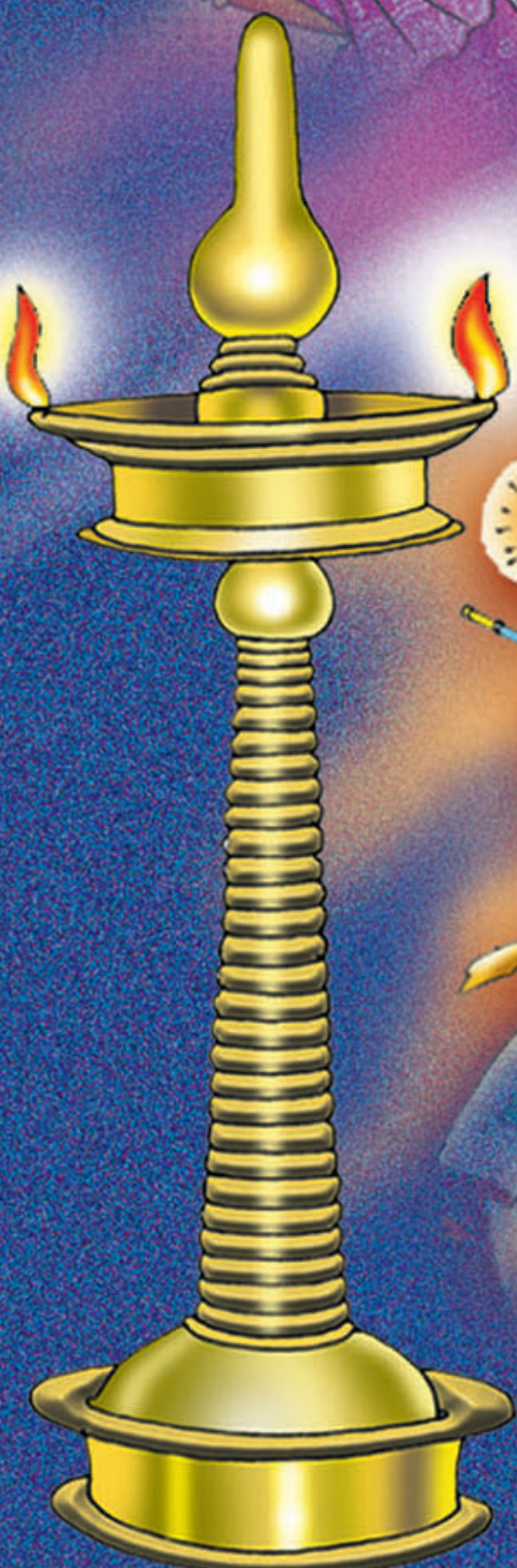
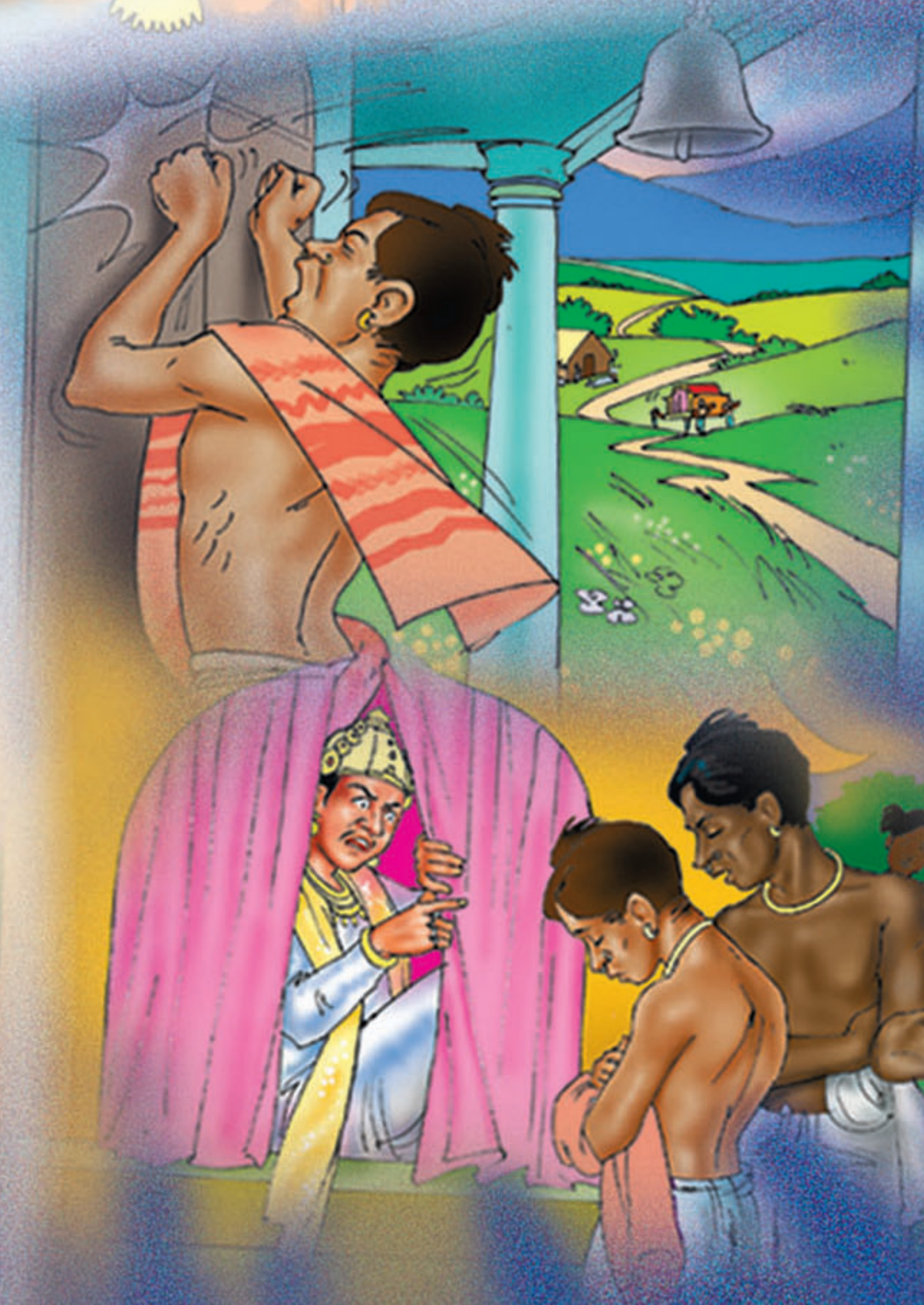




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(A FOLK TALE FROM GUJARAT)
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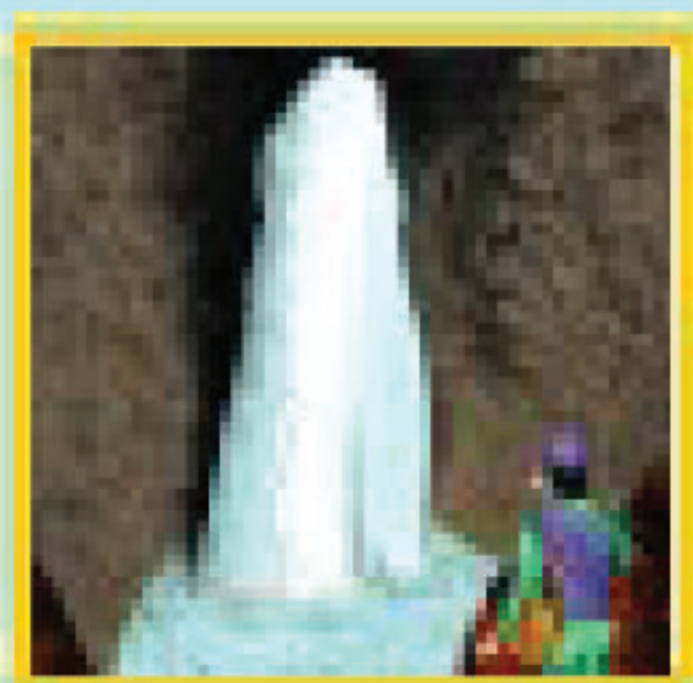


TERMINATOR

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The largest range of kids bikes
HERO CYCLES
THE ABC OF CYCLING



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Founded by

B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

An educated child can be a teacher

A little over half-a-century ago, we had foreigners deciding our destinies.

The general complaint was that our schools and colleges were mere “factories” producing clerks for the foreign rulers.

With the advent of independence, we tried to overhaul the system by retaining the pattern but making changes in the syllabus and introducing new subjects for study. The result is, our best brains are not available for service to their motherland!

Whatever we have done with Education, it has left us with thousands of educated people who remain unemployed. At the same time, there are thousands of others who have not received any education. It is this segment of population that we have to take care of—especially the younger generation among them. Many of them missed education because there were no schools at approachable distances. Several others were sent to schools but they left half-way through their schooling.

If there are no schools nearby or if schools cannot attract them, does it mean children are to be deprived of education? Education need not wait for a four-walled classroom. One’s own home can be a classroom, and those of *you* who have the good fortune of attending a school can become a teacher to the less fortunate children in your home—like boys and girls employed in your household—and those of your neighbourhood.

The father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, whose birth anniversary comes off on October 2, had said: “Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated”.

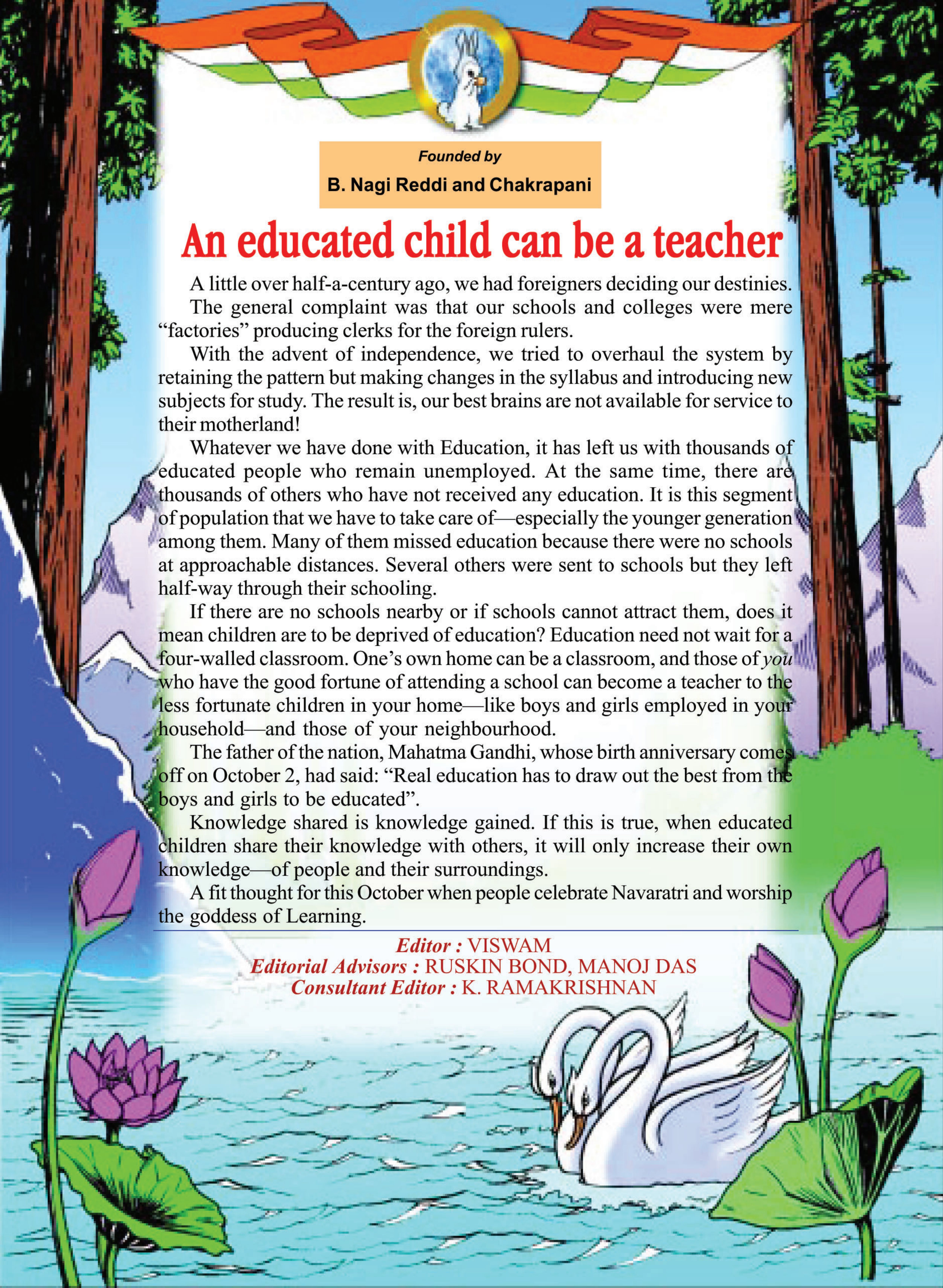
Knowledge shared is knowledge gained. If this is true, when educated children share their knowledge with others, it will only increase their own knowledge—of people and their surroundings.

A fit thought for this October when people celebrate Navaratri and worship the goddess of Learning.

Editor : VISWAM

Editorial Advisors : RUSKIN BOND, MANOJ DAS

Consultant Editor : K. RAMAKRISHNAN



Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

Heroes of India-1

Hi pals! Take a good look at this Heroes Quiz. All the heroes featured here are drawn from the pages of history. Surely you know them!

**Three
all correct entries
will receive bicycles
as awards.***



Fill in the blanks next to each question leg by. Which of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write 10 words on **My favourite hero from history is**

.....
.....
.....
.....

Name of participant:

Age:Class:.....

Address:

.....

.....

P:.....P:.....

Signature of participant:

Signature of parent:

Please tear off the page and address it to
Heroes of India Quiz-1

CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

No. 82, Defence Officers Colony

Hikathalgaal, Chennai - 600 097.

on/before **November 5, 2001**

Instructions

1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8 - 14 years.

2. Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size. If there are more than one all correct entry, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of **My favourite hero**.

3. The judges' decision will be final.

4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.

5. The winners will be intimated by post.

*Prizes brought
to you by*



This came from G. Trivikram, Cuddapah:

The editorials of July and August echoed eloquently our heartfelt feelings. The stories and features in the August issue were excellent. The interpretations made in "Saga of India" are very interesting.

Reader K. N. Ramesh of Ashwapuram (Andhra Pradesh) writes:

I compliment Chandamama's efforts to sustain India's spiritual heritage in its pages. The August issue was very good. A special applause for publishing about Ganesh Chaturthi and Odissi. Please tell us about Vijayadasami and Diwali.

Reader Dr. G. M. Katti of Kokatnur, Karnataka, has the following comments on the Sanskrit Chandamama:

I am very proud to state that I can now write letters in Sanskrit to my friends and relatives who know that language. It is all because of *Chandamama*. The magazine used to devote some pages for Sanskrit grammar and conversation. Please re-introduce these features. It will be a great help to students. I am very happy about the simple but beautiful translation.

Reader Vivek N. K., of Standard VIII, writes from Saidapet, Chennai:

I am a fan of *Chandamama*, which I read very regularly. It is the best of all magazines. I don't miss to read Garuda the Invincible. I like it "as much as fresh meat loves salt" (see page 46, August 2001).

**A PICK FROM OUR
MAIL BAG**

This came from reader Paramananda, Ch. of Bhopal:

Since childhood, I am reading *Chandamama*, which pours emotional power.

Reader Vikash Kumar of Rajahmundry writes on behalf of his friends:

Me and my classmates are great fans of your magazine. Every month we eagerly await the new issue. The magazine improves our knowledge very much. Truly, *Chandamama* is an inspiring magazine. Our humble request is, please publish some adventure stories; also suspense stories.

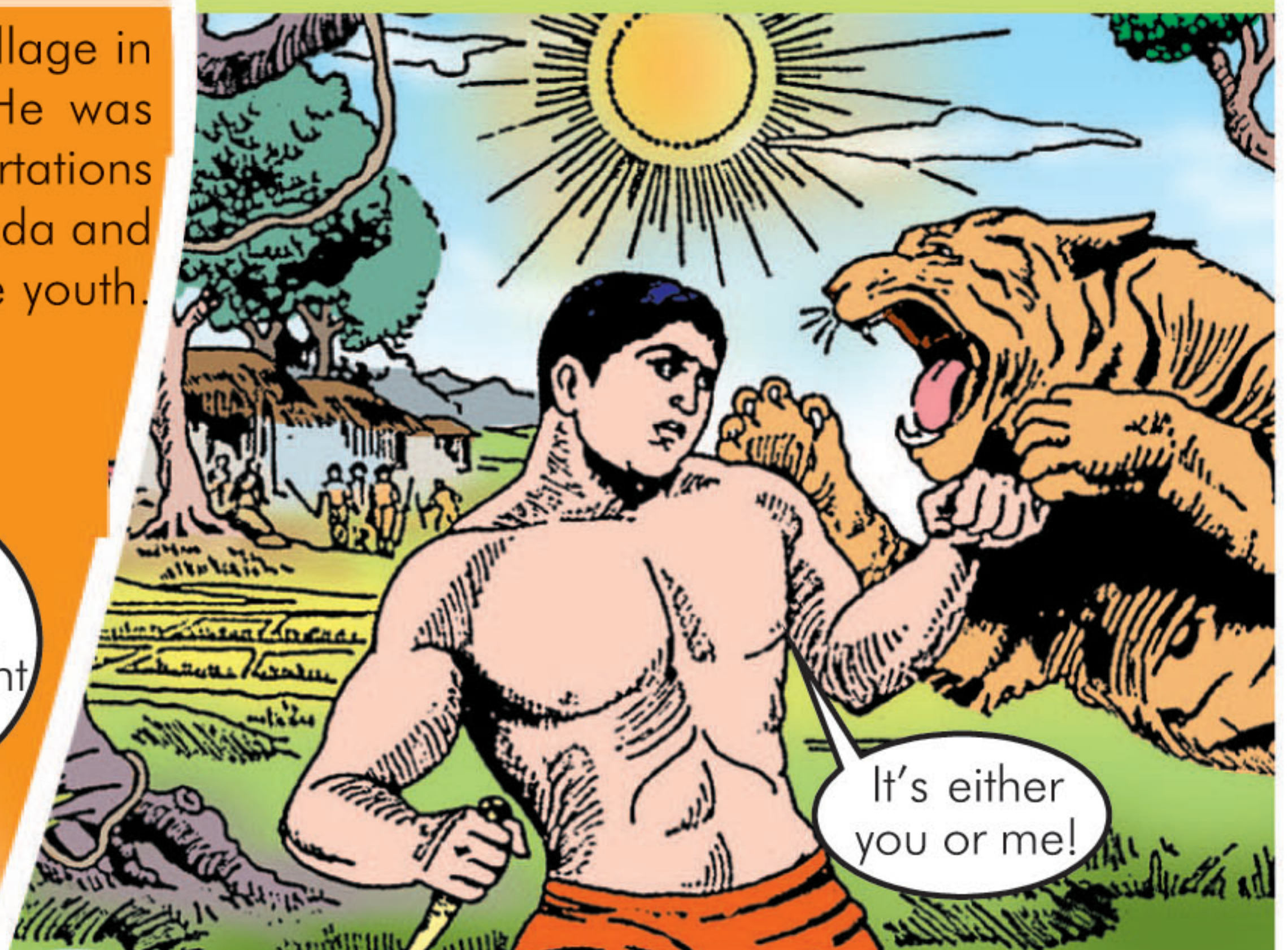
Reader Gigi Job of Koothrapally, Kottayam, Kerala, also reads *Chandamama* "regularly" and says: "I like it very much".

Editor's note: Letters without the senders' name or address will not receive our attention.



Many in India sacrificed their lives, fighting for the country's liberation from foreign rule. Bagha Jatin was one of them.

One day, a tiger sprang on Jatin. But he managed to kill the animal. He came to be called 'Bagha' Jatin.



Jatin began organising secret groups. They had only one aim: drive away the foreigners.

Jatin trained them in wielding lathis and firearms. All of them dedicated themselves to freeing their motherland.



The existence of the secret groups was found out. Jatin was arrested. He was tortured but he refused to speak.

Jatin was set free. He sought arms and ammunition from Germany which was willing to supply them.



The German ship dumped the precious cargo in the sea just before it was captured by two British ships.



There was more bad news for Jatin. The police had traced their hide-out. Jatin and his companions made a daring escape in blinding rain.



The police were frustrated when Jatin and his team gave them the slip at every point. They now spread a rumour.



The villagers near the river were alerted when they saw four men wading in the swirling waters.



On reaching the river bank, they took cover behind ant-hills. Soon there was a shower of bullets. The youth retaliated. Many policemen fell dead. Jatin was injured and taken captive.



Sir Charles Tegart, Commissioner of Police, went to see their prize catch. He praised Bagha Jatin before he passed away.





Have a tryst with nature at the Chilika Lake in Orissa, the largest brackish water lake in Asia. Birdwatchers can enjoy a veritable paradise spread over 1,100 sq.km. Innumerable bird species – such as the white-bellied sea eagle, the purple moorhen, and the heron - inhabit the lake, while many others like the flamingos migrate here in winter.

The peach coloured flamingos are a special attraction of the Chilika Lake.

A wide variety of wild animals like the cheetals, blackbucks, monkeys, fishing cats, mongoose, porcupines, snakes, turtles and lizards, can be seen in the hills and woods around the lake.

You can cruise to the various islands dotting the lake by motor launches. Facilities for boating and fishing are available as well! Those interested in water sports can freak out at the Water Sports Complex.

The confluence of Chilika with the sea at Satapada, about 28 km away from the lake, is a beautiful spot where you can meet some dolphins, if you are lucky!

How to get there: Buses and taxis are available from Puri, Cuttack, and Bhubaneswar. The Kolkata-Chennai rail route touches Chilika at Balugaon, Chilika, and Rambha. The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar, 100 km away.

A QUIZ FOR YOU!

For children up to 14 years
CONTEST - II

1. The Chilika Lake has a sanctuary for migratory birds. Which one is the most attractive among them?

2. Which is the only sanctuary in Orissa where the Pacific Ridley Sea Turtles nest after a long travel from their South American home?

3. A famous zoo in Orissa is known for a unique breed of tigers. Name the zoo and the tiger species.

Write your answers legibly in the blank space provided, fill in the coupon below and send the entry to

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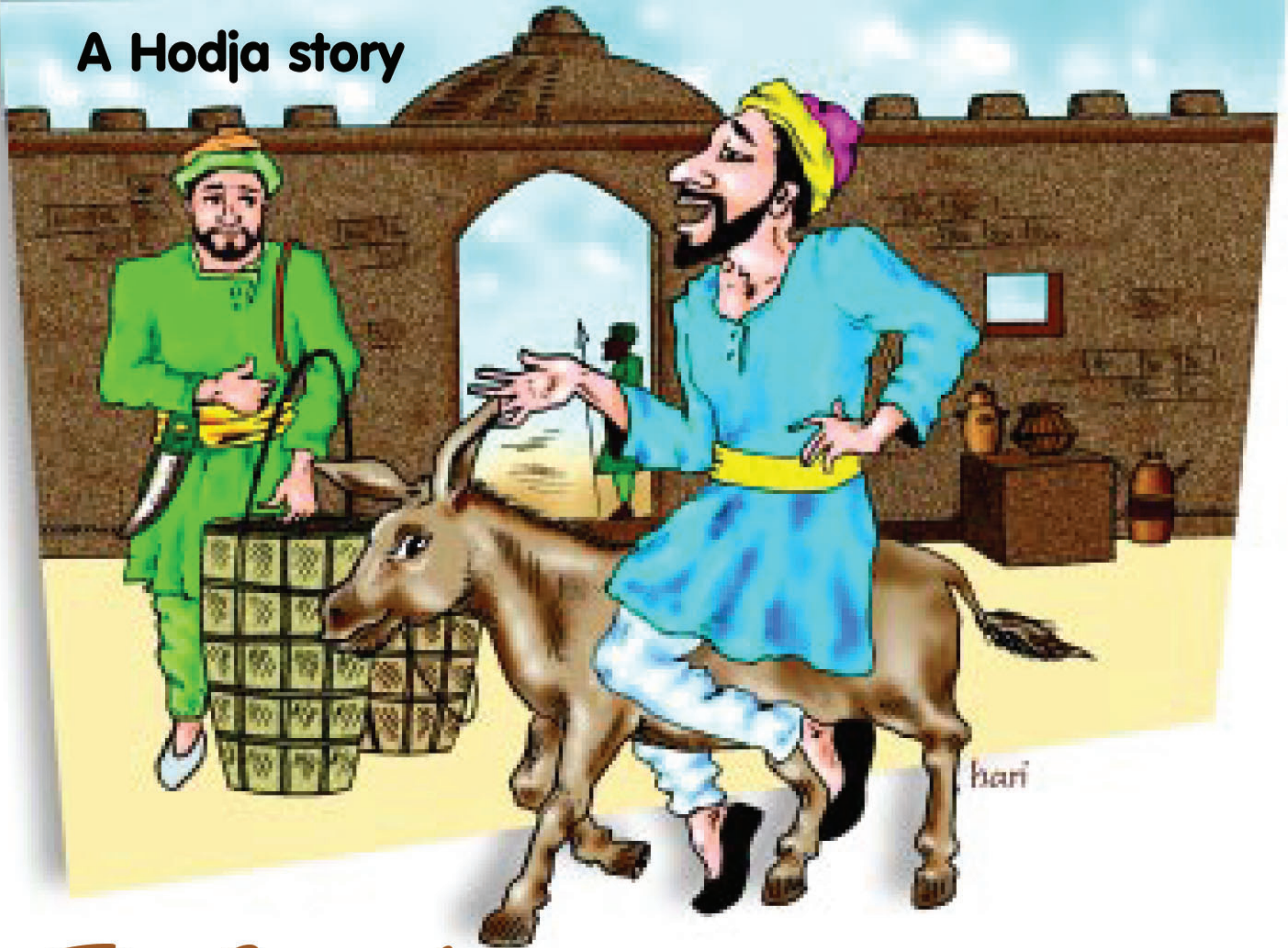
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Pin..... Phone



Winners picked by Orissa Tourism in each contest will be eligible for **3-days, 2-night** stay at any of the **OTDC Panthanivas**, upto a maximum of four members of a family. Only original forms will be entertained. The competition is not open to CIL and Orissa Tourism family members. Orissa Tourism, Paryatan Bhaven, Bhubaneswar - 751 014. Ph : (0674) 432177, Fax : (0674) 430887, e-mail : ortour@sancharnet.in. Website : Orissa-tourism.com





The Smuggler

*H*odja Naseeruddin riding his donkey was a common and popular sight. Everyone was used to seeing the Hodja travel on a donkey from place to place and would greet him affectionately as he passed them by.

At one time the Hodja often went from Persia to Greece. When he set off from Persia he always had two panniers of straw with him.

The guards at the border got suspicious after some time as they saw him go into Greece so frequently. So they started searching the panniers carefully for forbidden goods. Though the guards were convinced that the Hodja was carrying something he should not, they never found anything on him.

“What are you carrying, Hodja?” The guards would ask.

“Why don’t you search me if you are suspicious?” Naseeruddin would answer.

After many years, Hodja Naseeruddin, who was now living in great luxury in Turkey, met one of the customs guards who had searched him so carefully earlier.

“Tell me, Hodja, now that you’re out of the jurisdiction of Greece and Persia, living in such luxury—what was it that you were smuggling when we could never catch you?”

“Donkeys!” was the answer. “Did you ever see me returning from Greece? No, you wouldn’t have. I was not riding a donkey then!” he added with a chuckle.

Of birds in my bushes

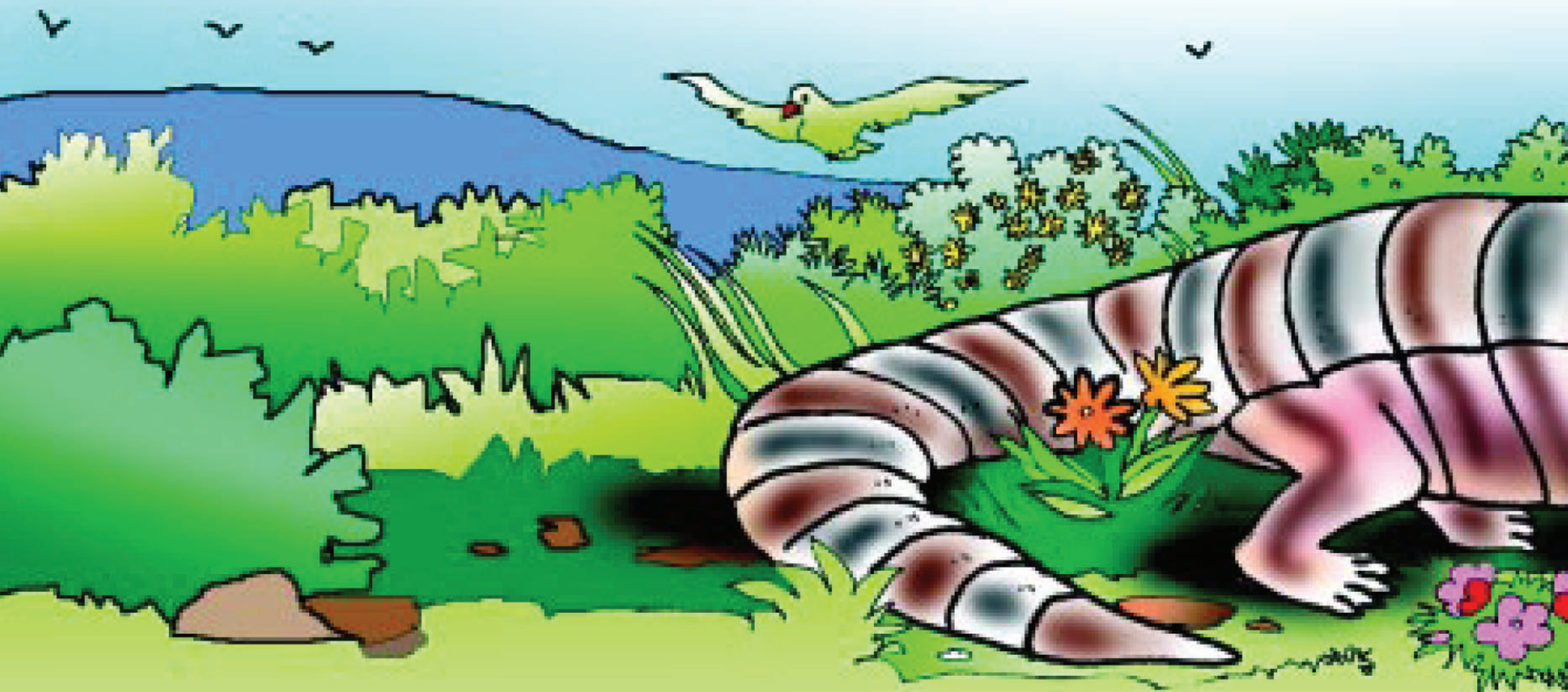
The thing I like most about shrubs and small bushes is that they are about my size or thereabouts. I can meet them on equal terms. Most trees grow tall, they overtake us after a few years, and we find ourselves looking up to them with a certain amount of awe and deference. And so we should.

A bush, on the other hand, may have been in the ground a long time—thirty or forty years or more—while continuing to remain a bush, man-size and approachable. A bush may spread sideways or gain in substance, but it seldom towers over you. This means that I can be on intimate terms with it, know its qualities—of leaf, bud, flower, and fruit—and also its inhabitants, be they

insects, birds, small mammals or reptiles.

Of course, we know that bushes are ideal for binding the earth together and preventing erosion. In this respect they are just as important as trees. Every monsoon I witness landslides all about me, but I know the hillside just above my cottage is well-knit, knotted, and netted by bilberry and raspberry, wild jasmine, dog-rose and bramble, and other shrubs, vines, and creepers.

I have made a small bench in the middle of this civilised wilderness. And sitting here, I can look down on my own roof, as well as sideways and upwards, into a number of bushes teeming with life throughout the year. This is my favourite place. No one can find me



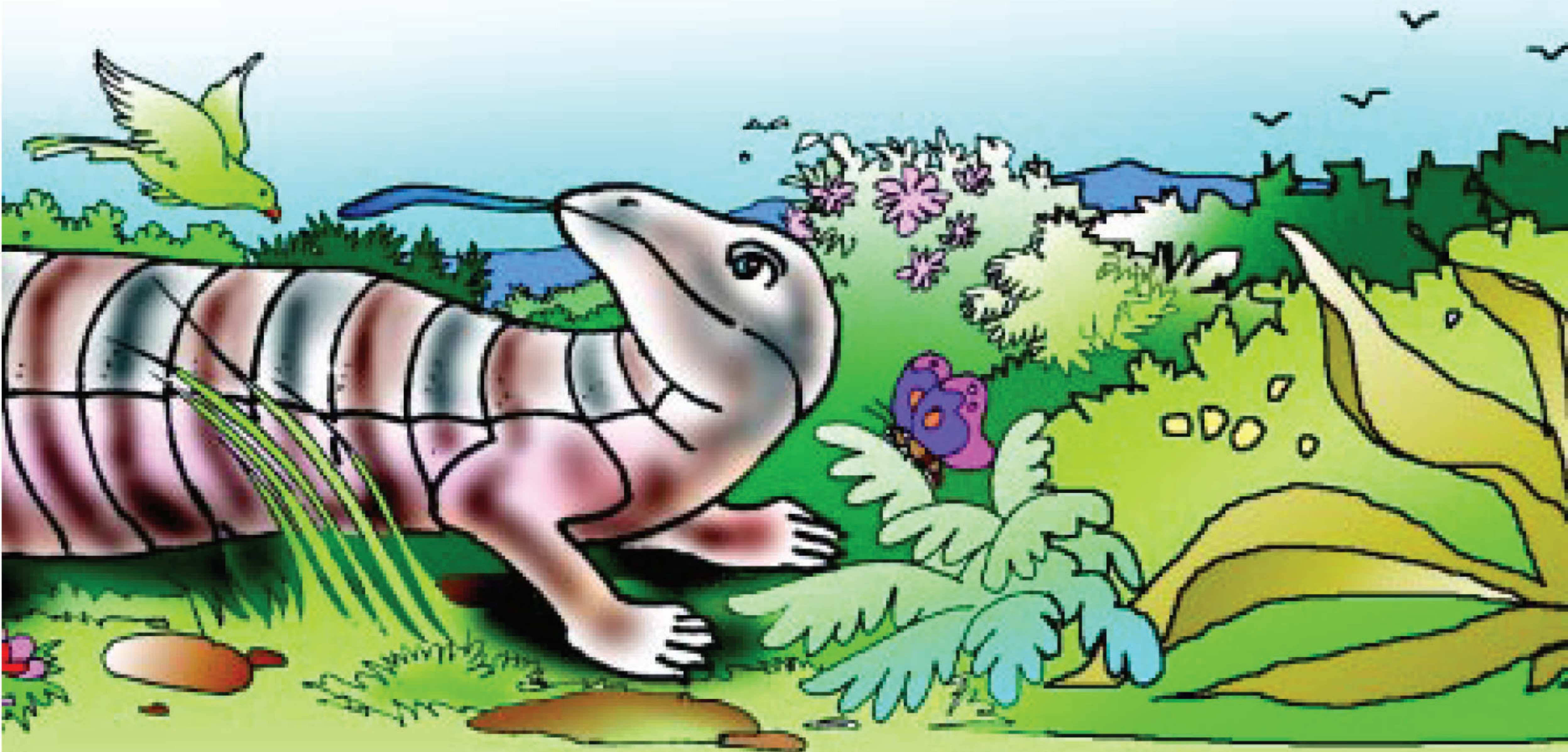
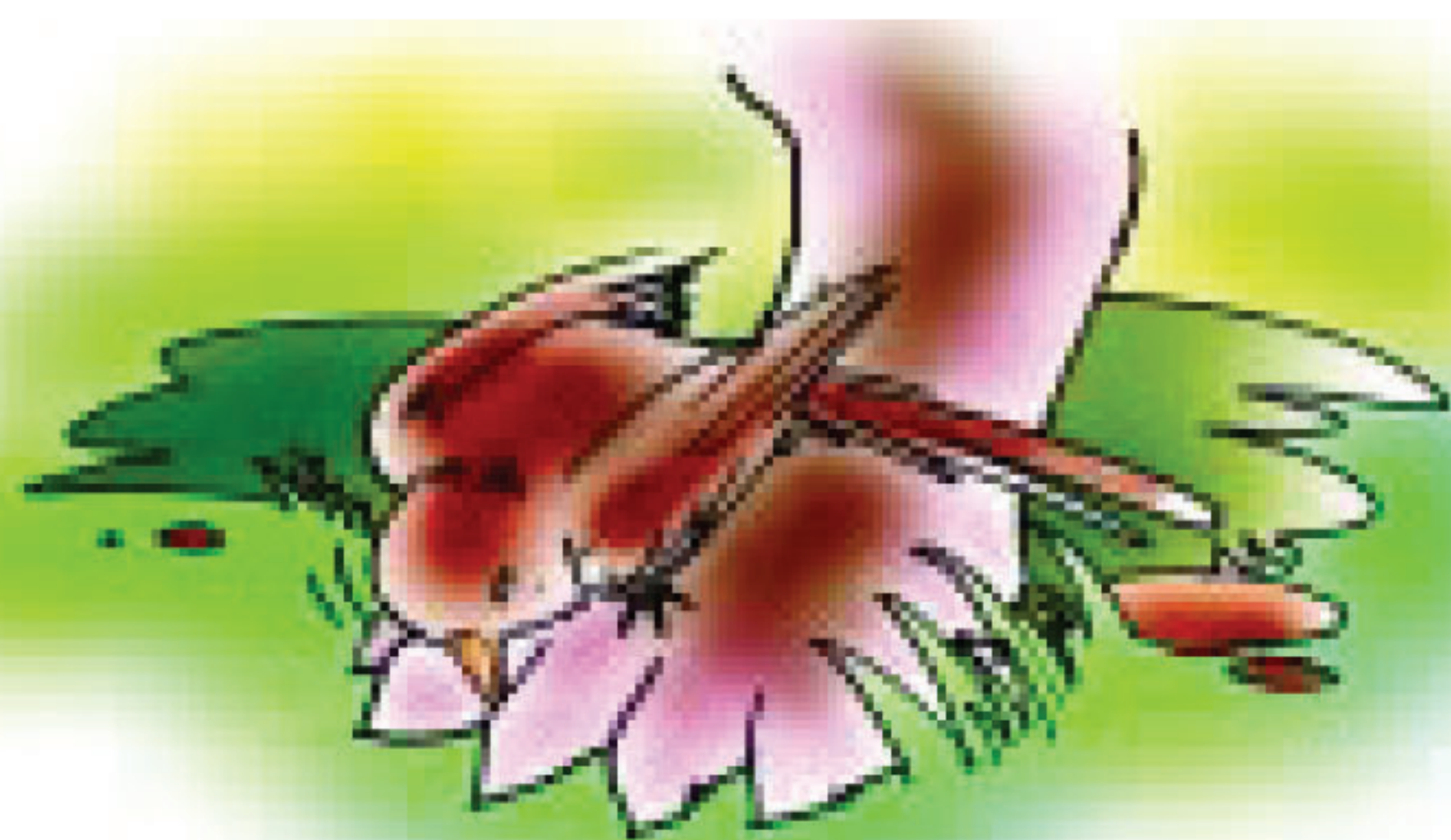
here, unless I call out and make my presence known. The buntings and sparrows, “grown accustomed to my face” and welcoming the grain I scatter for them, flit about near my feet. One of them, bolder than the rest, alights on my shoe and proceeds to polish his beak on the leather. The sparrows are here all the year round. So are the whistling-thrushes, who live in the shadows between house and hill, sheltered by a water-wood bush, so called because it likes cool, damp places.

Summer brings the fruit-eating birds, for now the berries are ripe. A pair of green pigeons, rare in these parts, scramble over the branches of a hawthorn bush, delicately picking off the fruit. The raspberry bush is raided by bands of finches and greedy yellow-bottomed bulbuls. A flock of bright green parrots come swooping down on

the medlar tree, but they do not stay for long. Taking flight at my approach, they wheel above, green and gold in the sunlight, and make for the plum trees further down the road.

The kingora, a native Himalayan shrub similar to the bilberry, attracts small boys as well as birds. On their way to and from school, the boys scramble up the hillside and help themselves to the small sweet and sour berries. Then, lips stained purple, they go their merry way. The birds return.

Other inhabitants of this shrub land include the skink, a tiny lizard-like



reptile, quite harmless. It emerges from its home among stones or roots to sun itself or drink from a leaf-cup of water. I have to protect these skinks from a large prowling tabby-cat who thinks the hillside and everything on it belongs to him. From my rough bench, I can see him move stealthily around the corner of my roof. He has his eye on the slow-moving green pigeons, I am sure. I shall have to watch out for him.

There would not be much point in encouraging the birds to visit my bushes if the main beneficiary is to be that handsome but single-minded cat!

There are flowering shrubs, too—a tangle of dog-roses, the wild yellow jasmine, a buddleia popular with honey bees, and a spreading mayflower which today is covered with small saffron-winged butterflies.

The grass, straw-yellow in winter, is now green and sweet, sprinkled with buttercups and clover. I can abandon the bench and lie on the grass, studying it at close quarters while repeating Whitman's lines:

*A child said, 'What is the grass?'
fetching it to me with full hands.*

How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I am no wiser, either, but grass is obviously a good thing, providing a home for crickets and ladybirds and other small creatures. It would not be much fun living on a planet where grass could not grow.

That cat agrees with me. He is flat on his stomach on the grass, inching closer to one of those defence-less little skinks. He has decided that a skink in hand is worth two birds in the bush. I get to my feet, and the cat runs away.

The green pigeons have also flown away. The smaller birds remain where they are; they know they are too swift for the prowler. I return to my bench and watch the finches and coppersmiths arrive and depart. You might call my shrubbery an arrival and departure lounge for small birds, but they are also free to take up residence if they so wish. Their presence adds sweetness to my life. A bush at hand is good for many a bird!



The gift for the girl

In the middle of the blue waters of the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Africa, lies the beautiful island of Mauritius. Formed by an old extinct volcano, the island lies like a teardrop in the ocean. Its many forests are home to a great variety of trees and all kinds of strange beasts and birds. The island attracted traders and merchants from many lands. Enchanted by the beauty of the land and climate, they stayed on and made Mauritius their home.



One such prosperous merchant, who had three beautiful daughters, was one day setting off on a long journey through the land. Before he left, he went into his daughters' room and said, "Dear girls, I'm going to be away for a long time. I hope to go to many different places and come back with a lot of wealth. What can I bring back for you? There will be beautiful jewels and clothes and exotic things in the places I shall go to."

The first one who prided herself on her long swanlike neck said: "O dear father, do you think you can get me a diamond necklace with a pendant like a shimmering fall of water? I think that will look good on my long neck."

The second who was very proud of her slim waist said: "I'd like a blue velvet dress sewn with lustrous pearls around the waist."

The third one was busy reading a book and did not really hear her father, so she said: "Sabour". Now, that word meant 'wait', but the father thought, that was what she wanted. Fathers can't always understand what their children say and want. He thought that it might be something that was the rage with all young people, something strange that he hadn't heard of. So he set off on his journey with the three things written down on his list.

The merchant reached a market town after travelling on his elephant with his goods and men behind him in an



impressive procession. He rode across a forest of mahogany trees to a market town. He did good business there. As he was concluding his last deal in the place, the man he was talking to spoke of a fine jeweller in town. The merchant pricked up his ears and on enquiry found he was a fine diamond merchant. So he bought the best diamond necklace the jeweller had and indeed the necklace came with a pendant that looked like a shimmering waterfall. So that was the first thing he managed to cross off his list.

Then he went along the coast, past wide swathes of smooth sand lining the clear blue sea till he came to a fishing village. He found quite a large market at the village. A ship had just come in from foreign shores with many beautiful

things. The men from the ship were interested in the wares the merchant had and so he struck a good bargain. Among the foreign items on display, he saw a beautiful velvet dress sewn with lustrous pearls, just like the one his daughter had asked for and so he bought it and struck the second item off his list.

Then as he travelled along on his elephant he asked various people if they had seen or heard of anything called 'sabour'. But, of course, nobody had. The merchant got increasingly worried because the youngest daughter was quite his favourite and he really, really wanted to get her heart's desire for her. Finally, after many days, and completely disheartened, he turned his elephant homewards.

But something strange happened. The animal refused to move! Now the merchant knew that the elephant of his would not go home till he had finished all his errands. So he guessed that there was a sabour somewhere and that he must find it before his elephant would take him home.

As they proceeded to the next kingdom, the merchant happened to ask a passing woman if she had heard of sabour, just as he had done with many others before. This time the answer was not just a blank stare; instead, the woman said: "But, of course, what a question! Who doesn't know the prince of this land?"

The merchant at once perked up. He made his elephant walk faster and as soon as they reached the palace, he asked for the prince. When the prince was told that a merchant from a far away land had heard of him and wanted to see him, he became quite curious and asked that he be sent in.

As soon as the merchant saw the handsome prince, he bowed low and then told him about his beautiful daughters and the three items on his list. The prince was rather amused and when the merchant showed him pictures of his daughters, the prince thought that the youngest one was really very pretty.

So, he gave the merchant a magic fan as a gift for her and said, "Tell her this is a present from Sabour."

The merchant now crossed the last item off his list and turned his elephant homeward. Of course, since all the errands had been done, the elephant agreed to walk home.

The merchant got home and was welcomed eagerly by his daughters who came crowding to the room to see what their father had brought for them.

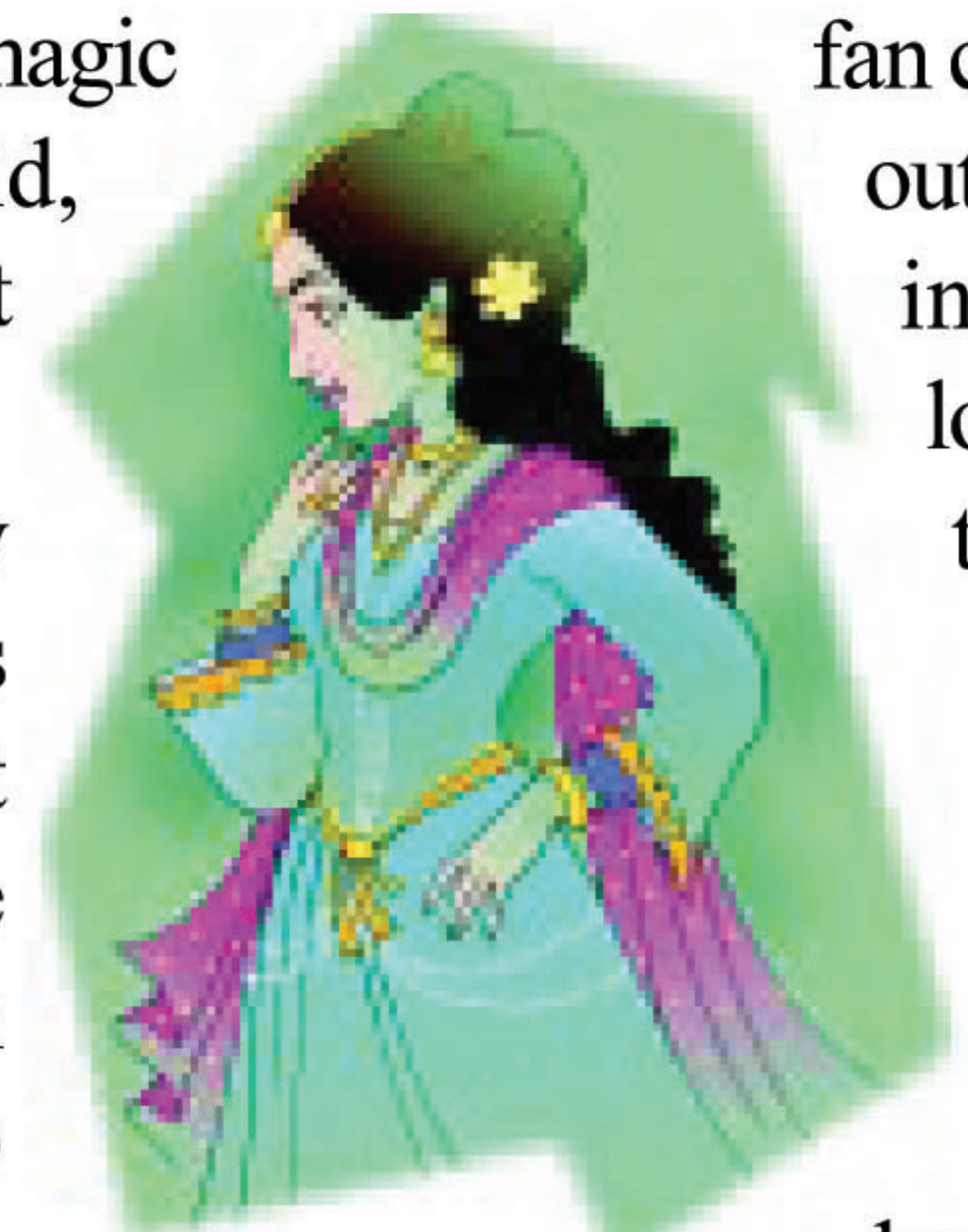
The eldest girl was very pleased to see the necklace. She wore it at once

and went to the mirror to preen and she craned her neck this way and that, and was happy to see the pendant shimmer like a waterfall. She thought her neck was now adorned just the way it ought to be.



The second daughter was thrilled with her blue velvet dress and thought the pearls set off her slim waist to perfection.

The third daughter was curious to see what her father had got her, as she had not really asked for anything. Her father called her and with great care took out the magic fan and gave it to her as though it was the most precious thing in the world. The girl looked at the



fan curiously. When she spread out the fan, the leaves gleamed in rainbow colours. As she looked at them in fascination, there was a sudden ripple of light and a face appeared. That was Sabour. He was so charmed by the third daughter that he asked her to marry him. The third daughter was equally charmed

by Sabour and she agreed to marry him. The merchant, too, happily agreed to the wedding, for the groom was such a handsome, charming, and rich man.

On the day of the wedding, the eldest daughter, who had not received

any proposal in spite of her long swan like neck, got very jealous and sprinkled ground glass on the prince's bed. Sabour lay down on the bed and got hurt by the glass, which stuck on to his body. He took the magic fan that lay next to his wife and disappeared with its help. Nobody knew where he went, though they searched high and low and in all the places people could possibly hide.

After six months the unhappy wife learnt that Sabour had gone back to his country and was lying very ill there. She also heard that his father, the king, had promised half his kingdom to whoever cured Sabour. So the girl disguised herself as a priest with a long beard and set out to see her husband. On the way she sat down to rest under a tree. As she sat there wondering what she could do when she saw Sabour, she heard two

birds talking. They were, in fact, talking about her and Sabour.

"Look at this sad girl," said one, "her husband is unwell and she doesn't know what she should do."

"Yes," said the other. "Poor thing, if only she knew that all she has to do is to take the clay that is under this tree and apply it on his body, then the glass that ails him will come out and he will be cured."

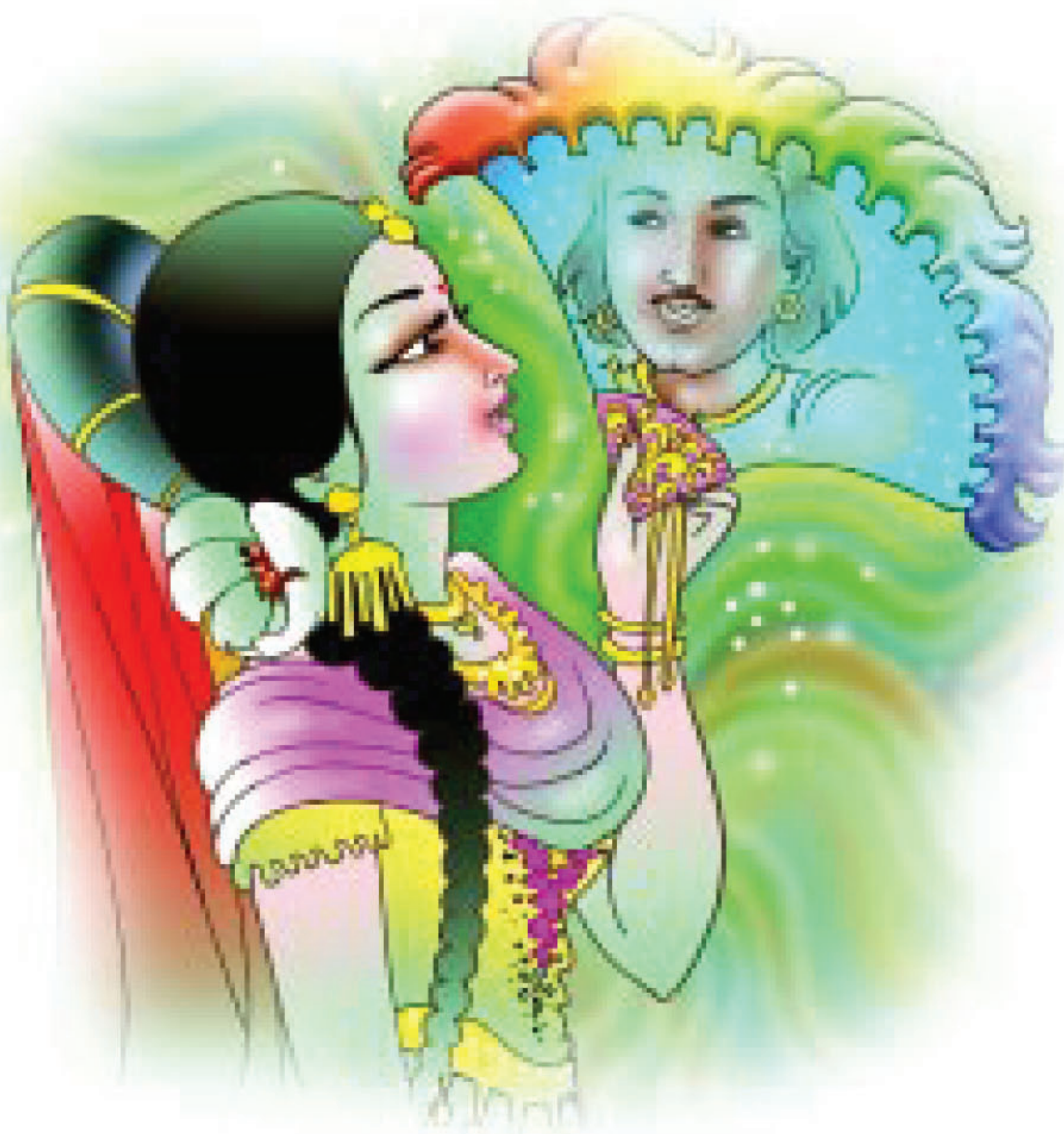
As soon as she heard this, the girl collected a lump of clay and knotted it in her scarf and set off once again to her husband's palace. There she told the king that she knew of a cure for the prince. When she was allowed in, she did exactly what she had heard the birds say. In a little while Sabour got cured. The king was very pleased and wanted to reward the priest with half his kingdom, but the priest asked for something else.

"O king, if you really want to reward me, let the prince marry my daughter. I do not really want your kingdom."

The king agreed but Sabour refused. He said, "I'm already married to the sweetest girl on earth. I had to run away because her sister wanted to hurt me."

Then the third daughter pulled off her beard and removed her priest's disguise to Sabour's great surprise and joy. The couple, now united, lived happily together for a long time.

Chandamama



A full-page illustration in a comic book style. King Vikram, a man with a mustache wearing a red tunic with gold trim and a white fur cape, carries a pale, lifeless body over his shoulder. He holds a long, curved sword in his right hand. They are in a dark, spooky forest at night. A gnarled tree with skulls hanging from its branches is on the left. A black cat sits on a branch above Vikram, and a bat flies in the dark sky. The ground is covered in green grass, purple flowers, and several human skulls. A large snake is coiled on the ground in the foreground. The overall mood is eerie and suspenseful.

New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala

The Hermit's Boons

*B*raving the dark moonless night and the howling gale, the flashes of lightning and the rumbling thunder, stout-hearted King Vikram made his way resolutely to the ancient tree in the eerie nook. He climbed the tree and brought down the corpse. He started trudging towards the cremation ground where the strange mendicant would be waiting for him.

The Vetala in the corpse spoke to Vikram again and said: "O King, I don't understand why you're bent on facing these unnecessary difficulties at this unearthly hour. Are you in search of magical



powers? And if you do receive them, are you going to use those powers in the best interests of someone else? Perhaps you don't know that the results of such supernatural powers are often unpredictable. Their effects change with the passing of time. Let me tell you the story of Shankar and Kalipada to illustrate my point. Listen to me carefully. You will soon forget your weariness." Then the Vetala began his narration:

Long ago, a farmer named Dharampal lived in a small village in the kingdom of Varal. He had a son called Shankar. Dharampal's wife had died while Shankar was still a child. Soon, he became a very spoilt child. He did not want to go to school. He became a

lazy boy and did not change a wee bit when he grew to be a young man. His father thought that Shankar's attitude might change if he married.

But marriage did not bring any change in Shankar. His wife, Kanaka, was very angry and unhappy about her husband's lazy life. She blamed her father-in-law for the way he had raised his son. She often had heated arguments with him, but it was too late to change Shankar.

After Dharampal's death, Kanaka started directing her anger at her husband and began nagging him. She insulted him even in front of his friends. One day, a friend of Shankar's came to visit them. Shankar asked his wife to prepare a meal for him. At this, she became so incensed that she shouted at the top of her voice. "I'll do nothing of that sort! Do you ever work and bring home at least a single rupee? Feeding you is bad enough, and now you want me to prepare food for your friend as well? This is not an inn to provide food for all and sundry."

The friend overheard these words and quietly went away. To Shankar this was the final straw. He could not tolerate being insulted in front of his friend. He left home and walked the whole day and reached a jungle by nightfall. As he was about to enter the jungle, he heard a

voice: “Who are you? Why are you entering this dense jungle when it is getting so dark?”

Shankar looked around trying to find out where the voice was coming from. He saw a hermit, deep in meditation, seated on an anthill. Shankar quickly went up to him and noticed the strange glow on his face. He sat at the hermit’s feet and poured out his whole sad story. He told him all about his wife’s shrewish character and insulting behaviour. “O! Holy one, I don’t have the patience and strength to live even the last years of my life with my nagging wife. Can you do something to change her into a loving and affectionate wife? If so, please do

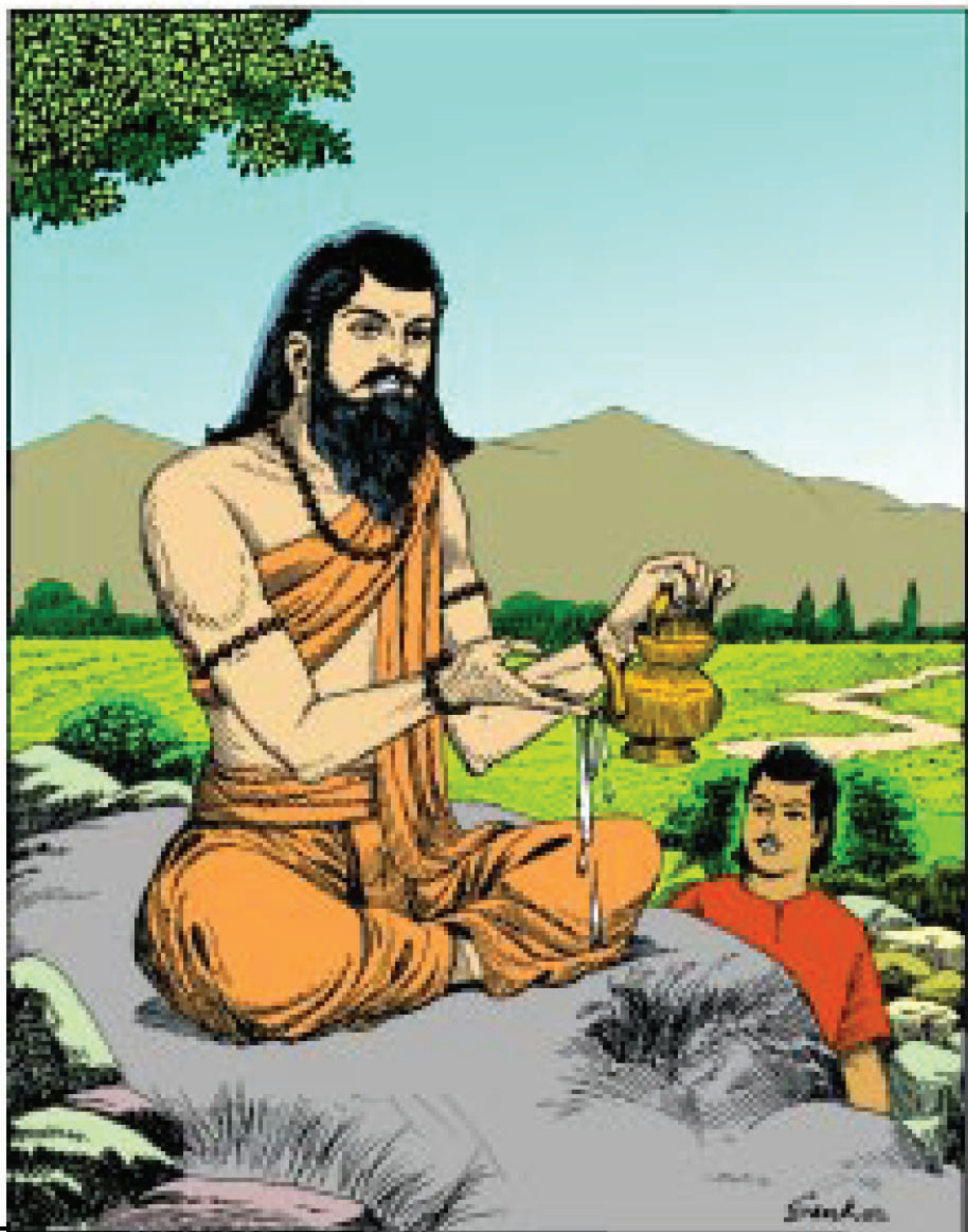
it immediately. However, if you think that nothing can be done, then allow me to stay right here at your feet serving you.”

The hermit first looked at him in anger but then smiled at him and closed his eyes in amusement. Then he took some holy water from a vessel beside him and sprinkled it on the ground saying, “May your wife’s harsh behaviour and nagging end!” He instructed Shankar to go home to experience the changes in Kanaka’s behaviour.

When Shankar reached home, he was pleasantly surprised to see Kanaka bowing low with tears in her eyes. “Forgive me, my lord. I know I’ve been ill-treating you so much all the time. Please forgive me.”

Shankar was beside himself with joy at the change that had come over his wife. He told her about his meeting with the hermit. “It is only through his blessings that you are so different now. We owe everything to him.”

Kanaka expressed her complete surprise at the turn of events. “I’ve heard of gods bestowing boons on people, but now even hermits have acquired such powers. Still a boon is a boon.” She looked at her hands for a while, thinking hard. Then she spoke up. “Why don’t you go back to this holy man and request him to grant me





a boon to make me fair, beautiful and slim, my lord?”

So Shankar went to the holy man again on the morrow. He made his request and waited expectantly. Once again the hermit took water from the holy vessel and sprinkled it on the ground, granting Shankar the boon he had asked for.

Shankar hurried home to see whether the hermit's boon had materialised. His wife had indeed become very beautiful, fair and young looking. Shankar was very happy.

After a few days, Kanaka went to Shankar again with yet another request. “I don't know how to cook tasty food. Unfortunately, none in our family knows how to cook. Please get a boon for me

from the hermit.” So saying she persuaded him to go to the hermit again. They experienced the joy and thrill of having another boon granted by the hermit. Shankar was now very satisfied and happy with life.

A week later, Kanaka went to Shankar again. She had really spent time thinking about the holy man and the wonderful powers he possessed. “My lord, I'm now very beautiful and young. I've also become a very good cook. But what is the use of all these boons? We're still as poor as we've always been. You must go to the hermit once again and ask him to grant you a boon to make us wealthy!”

This made Shankar really angry. He did not want to go to the hermit again and again with requests for more boons.

Unable to counter his wife, Shankar reluctantly went to look for the hermit. When he reached the spot where he had met him before, Shankar found to his dismay that the hermit was not to be seen anywhere. Feeling very disheartened, Shankar returned to the village. As he was walking past the place where free meals were being distributed, he heard someone calling out to him. “So Shankar, are you happy now?”

At first Shankar could not recognise who it was. A closer look revealed that it was the hermit, now looking very

different after having removed his long beard. Shankar ran up to him. “O! Holy one, where have you been? And what has happened to your beard and robes?”

The hermit laughed and said, “My name is Kalipada. I had gone to the jungle six years ago, with a problem very similar to yours. My wife, too, used to ill-treat and nag me. When I couldn’t bear it any longer, I left home and went away to the jungle. After six years of penance, I found that I had acquired supernatural powers and whatever I said was coming true. Your life has changed for the better because of the boons I gave you. I’ve decided to stop my penance and return home with the hope that the same boons will work even in my life.”

At this Shankar was very disappointed. He requested the hermit to continue his penance for just one more day so that Kanaka’s desire for wealth might be granted. Kalipada merely laughed. “Wise people of the past have often said that the fruit of hard work is really sweet. Keep laziness at bay. Learn to work hard. True happiness lies in that alone. I have to leave now, but I hope we meet again some day.” Saying this, Kalipada went his way.

He reached his village by nightfall and hurried to his house, full of anticipation and curiosity. As he went up to the doorway, he was arrested by voices coming through the open window. He realised that his wife Balamani and his two children, aged ten and eight, were talking about him. He stopped to listen.

His wife was telling them: “Your grandfather has left a sizeable inheritance for you, but unfortunately there’s no one here to take care of things. I haven’t been able to educate you well. In the next few years I’ll have to get you married. I don’t know whether I’ll be able to do all that is necessary. Your father was quite harsh and cruel. I know I was a difficult wife, but do all husbands have to become hermits? What then can wives who have cruel husbands do?”

Suddenly there was a big noise as if something had been thrown against



the wall. At that moment, Kalipada went near the door and called out to his wife, saying he had returned. He went up to the door and waited for it to be opened.

The Vetala stopped his narration there and asked King Vikram in a challenging tone, “O King, why do you think Kalipada was unable to solve his own problems, while he could grant Shankar boons by which his life had changed? Why was he able to change Shankar’s wife but was unable to grant the same boon to his own wife? Don’t you think that this is something very strange? Answer me if you can. If you know the answer and yet choose to remain silent, your head will break into many pieces!”

Then King Vikram answered the vampire: “In the beginning, Kalipada did not realise the strength and powers of his penance. Yet, when he saw that his

boons had a positive and immediate effect in Shankar’s life, he decided to try his powers on himself and his wife. He decided to return home. But things had not changed at his home. When he heard his wife talking to his children, he realised the truth of her statements and so knocked on the door, though he was almost tempted to go back to the jungle. He realised he had not been able to change his wife as he had changed Shankar’s wife Kanaka, because Kalipada was attempting to use his powers for his own benefit. Supernatural powers are meant to be used only for the good of others and not for selfish gains.”

As the Vetala knew he had made Vikram break his vow of silence, he took the corpse and flew back to the ancient tree. Vikramaditya drew his sword and once again went after the vampire.



Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation –
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages

21. Discovering the Divine in Nature



It was a memorable day for Sandip and Chameli. They had succeeded in taking their grandpa, Professor Devnath, for a picnic to a site not far from their town. It was a spot on the banks of a lake. Behind the lake stood a well-shaped wooded hill. The children had the company of their friends, too.

The weather was fine, and several of the trees around the lake had burst into a riot of flowers. A mellow sun was about to go down behind the hill.

“How divine!” exclaimed Chameli, gazing at the charming and serene sunset.

“Divine is the word, my child!” said the professor happily. “One of the

remarkable traits of our heritage is, our ancestors had viewed Nature as Divine. That is an attitude which expands our consciousness. And it was with that attitude that the sages found the Himalayas Divine; they founded shrines amidst those snowy mountains; they even paid their homage to the Himalayan peaks—for example, to Mount Kailash as the abode of Lord Siva,” added the professor.

“What a pity there should be murderers hiding in the hills to kill hapless people when they come out to pay their homage to such shrines—as they did to the pilgrims on their way to



Amarnath last July!” commented a friend of Sandip.

“Alas, we human beings have such vipers among us. God alone knows for how long they will be there, or when they would be gifted with some conscience to justify their status as human beings,” the professor remarked, with a sigh.

“What kind of shrine is this Amarnath, Grandpa? Who is the deity?” queried Sandip.

“Well, Amarnath is the most perfect example of man’s reverence for Nature,” said Professor Devnath, and since all the children looked at him with unmistakable eagerness, he narrated the story as well as the facts behind that unusual Himalayan shrine:

Amarnath, situated 4,000 metres above the sea level, in a hidden area of an empire of desolate snow, had been a holy place for thousands of years, but it lay forgotten for long. A shepherd who lost his lamb and had ventured into the area in search of it, suddenly found the strange cave, inside which stood the symbol of Siva entirely formed of snow. In fact, the symbol grew bigger with the waxing of the moon and became smaller with its waning.

The excited shepherd reported his discovery at the court of the King of Kashmir. The scholars in the court had known about the existence of such a cave, but they were not sure of its location. Nobody had seen it for the past few generations. They had only heard about the legend associated with the cave. Once upon a time—in the mythical era—Parvati, the consort of Lord Siva, grew curious about the garland of skulls the great god wore. He replied that the skulls all belonged to Parvati’s earlier incarnations. Every time she died, Siva collected her skull and added it to His garland.

“How is it that I die and I am born time and again, while you never die?” queried Parvati. Siva agreed to teach her the secret of immortality, so that she would not die again, but he said that it had to be at a place where no

living creature was there to listen to his words.

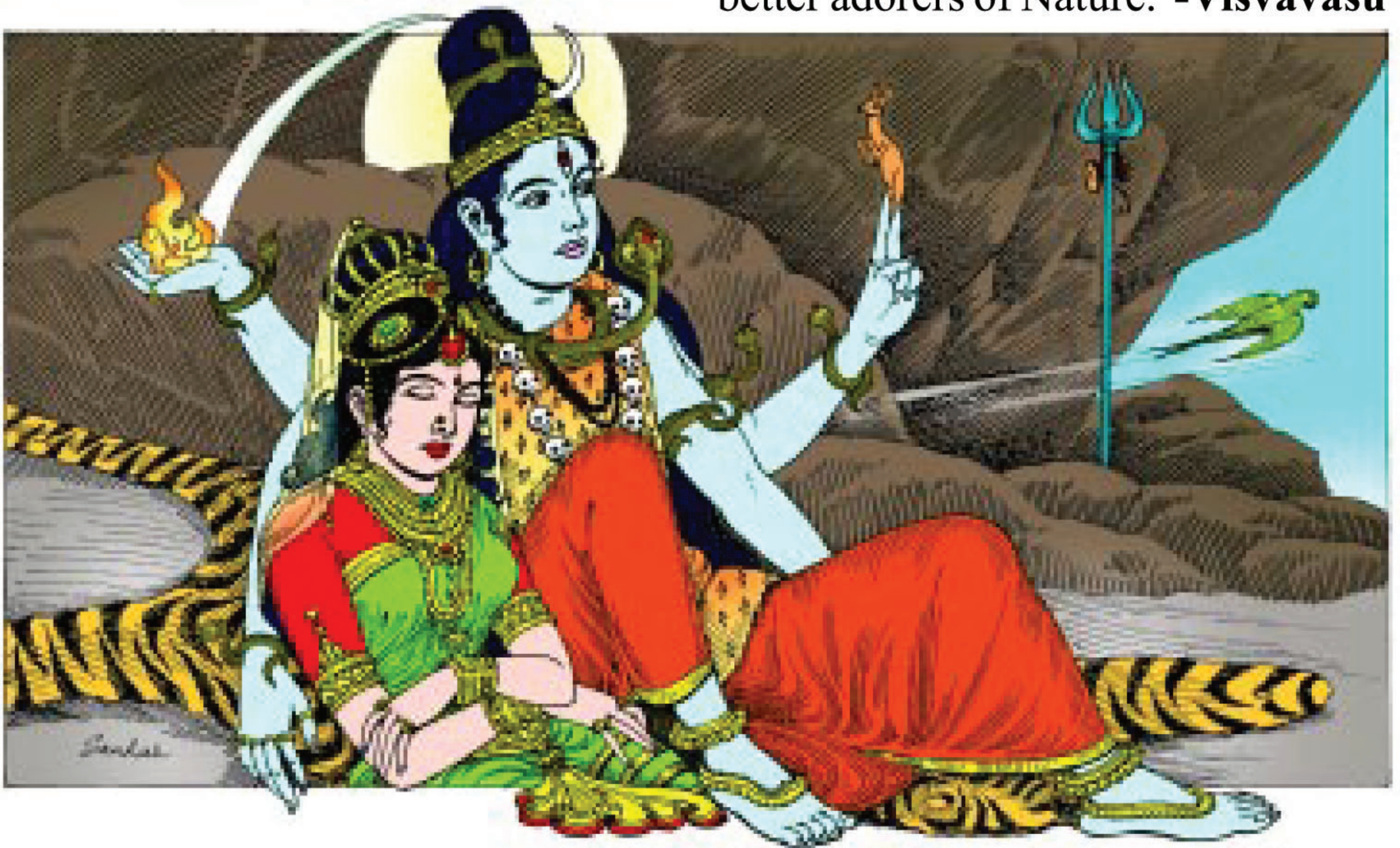
Siva's spirit-servants looked for such a spot and found a cave. Siva and Parvati sat down inside and He began narrating the lore. But even though Parvati fell asleep, someone was tenderly responding to Siva's narration. It was a parrot chick which had just come out of its egg. When Siva became conscious of its presence, it flew far away, and entered the womb of the great sage Vyasa's wife. The child born of her became famous as Shukadeva—*shuka* meaning parrot.

Guided by the shepherd, the king and his nobles visited the cave. That was more than a thousand years ago.

“Since then every year, when the forbidding snow on the way melts

clearing a way to the cave, thousands of pilgrims visit the shrine made by Nature. On an auspicious day they start from Pahalgaoon and trek the difficult path braving many hurdles, sometimes through rocky regions, sometimes crossing stiff ascents, or sometimes overlooked by dazzling peaks. They become part of the wonderful Nature around them. That itself is a great experience. Their joy grows great when the experience culminates in their having a glimpse of the phenomenon inside the cave—the luminous shaft of snow giving out an unearthly aura,” concluded the professor.

The sun had by then set and a thin dusk was spreading around the lake. It was time for the party to return to their homes, but some of them at least felt that verily they were going back as better adorers of Nature. -**Visvvasu**



A Folk Tale from Gujarat

Gujarat: then and now

Gujarat gets its name from 'Gujjar Rashtra', after the Gujjar tribe, who migrated into India fleeing from the invading Huns in the 5th century A.D.

However, the history of Gujarat dates back even further – as far back as 2000 B. C. Traces of the Harappan civilization have been found in the Rann of Kutch. It is also believed that Lord Krishna left Mathura to settle in the west coast of Saurashtra, at Dwaraka.

The state of Gujarat was formed on May 1, 1960, as a result of the Bombay Reorganization Act of 1960. The state is bounded by the Arabian Sea on the west, Pakistan and Rajasthan in the north and northeast respectively, Madhya Pradesh in the southeast, and Maharashtra in the south.

The total area of the state is 196,000 sq. km, which is about 6.1% of the total area of India. The population is 50,596,992, according to the 2001 Census. Gujarat ranks tenth among the Indian states in population and ninth in size.

October 2001

The boy who sold wisdom

Once upon a time, in a kingdom in Gujarat, there lived a young boy. His name was Vipul. When he was still quite young, his father died leaving him without any way of earning a living. But he had watched his father doing business and learnt a lot. One day, he had a very bright idea.

Vipul borrowed some money and set up a small stall in the market. He placed some sheets of plain paper on the counter, with a pen and an inkpot



Crafts

Gujarat is known for its vibrant and colourful handicrafts. Perhaps the most popular among these are the tie-and-dye or *Bandhni* or *Bandhej* materials. Gujarat is famous for the quality of its textiles – the exquisite geometric patterns of the Patola fabrics, the *zari* work of Surat, and the *Mashru* for its patterns.

The popular embroidery designs that originate in this state are the *chalak*, *salaiya*, *kangri*, *tikki*, and *katori*. The region of Kutch is also known for the sparkling mirror work done on dresses and saris.



close by. Then he put up a board that said **WISDOM FOR SALE**.

The traders and merchants around him usually called out their wares. There were stalls selling all sorts of things. There was even a stall selling costly fabrics and materials like *bandhej*, *zari* and *patola*. There were shops selling lacquer toys, cradles, chairs, and stands. Farther away was the most sought after place – the food stall selling *khamam dhokla*, *pathara*, *khandvi*, fried *farsans*, and sweets like hot *jalebis*, *doodhpak* and *shrikhand*.

They were all selling items like vegetables or grains, perfumes or sweets, or kitchen stuff – things one could hold, feel, taste, or smell. But who could be this strange fellow who was selling wisdom? They took him

to be quite mad and ignored him. But Vipul did not lose heart and continued to sit at his stall and call out “Wisdom for sale!”

A rich man’s son, Budhunath, passed that way. He was always scolded by his father for being foolish. He stood in front of Vipul’s stall and frowned. “*Shun che?*” he asked and Vipul explained that it was wisdom. Budhunath now thought that this might be a good way of pleasing the old man. So, he asked Vipul how much wisdom cost per yard or however it was sold.

“Wisdom is not sold by yard, but by quality,” was Vipul’s answer, like any modern day consultant.

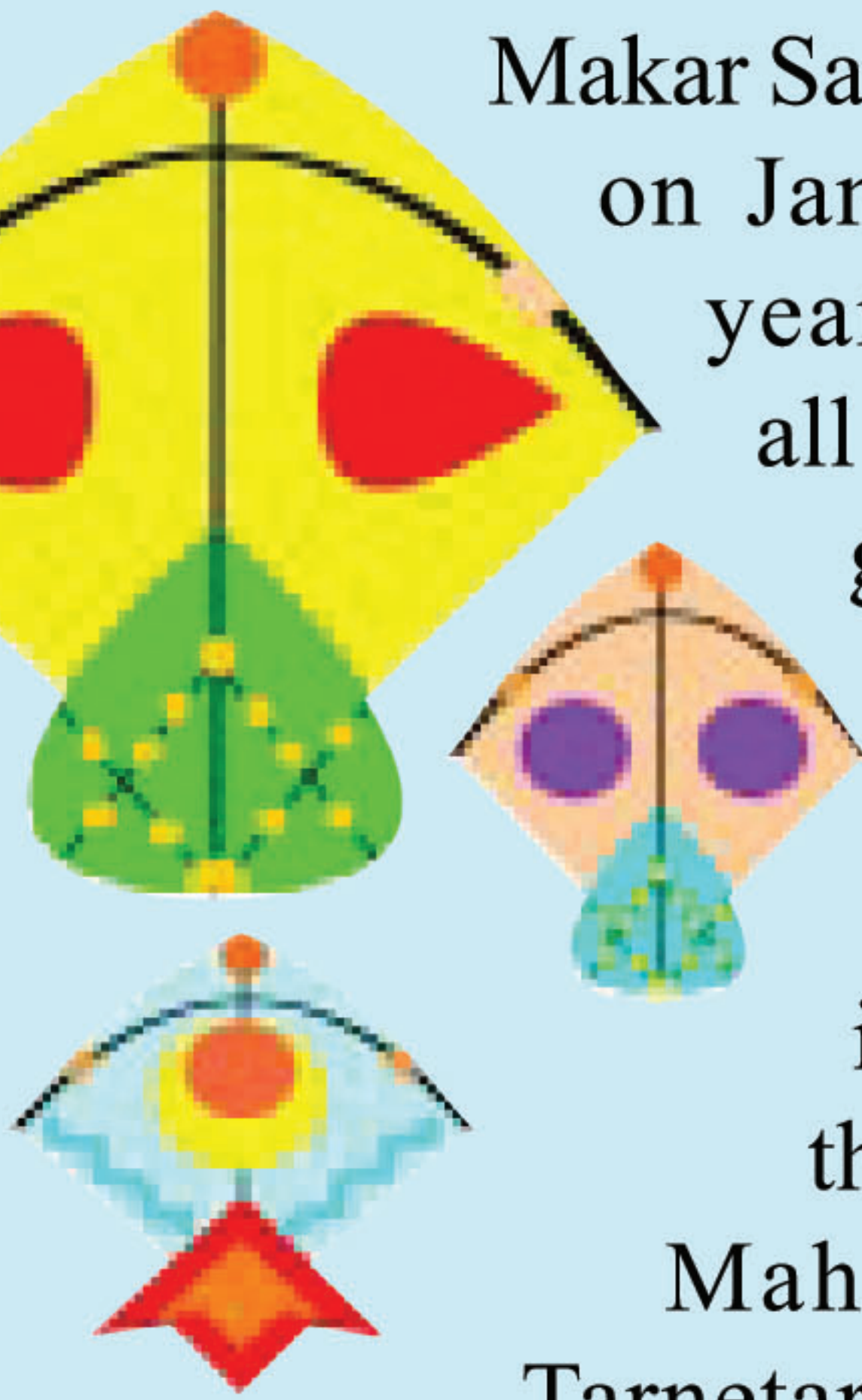
Budhunath, who really did not know much about anything, told him, “*Hun khareedeesh*. Give me one rupee worth of wisdom.”

So, Vipul took one of the sheets of paper and wrote: **“Don’t stand around and watch two people quarrelling.”** And he gave it to him.

Budhunath said, “*Khoob aabhaar*”, and happily folded the piece of paper and tucked it into his turban tied in the traditional manner,

Festivals and fairs

Gujarat is popular for its fairs and festivals. The most popular one is the kite festival held in Ahmedabad usually on Makar Sankranti that falls on January 14 every year. People from all over the world gather to participate in the competition.



The other important fair is the Trineteshwar Mahadev Fair at Tarnetar. It is believed that the swayamvar of Draupadi in the *Mahabharata* took place here.

An animal fair, similar to the famous Pushkar Mela in Rajasthan, is held annually at Vautha, at the confluence of the rivers Sabarmati and Vatrak. Donkey trading takes place at this fair.

and walked away, very pleased with his bargain.

However, when he went home, his father was most displeased. “Your foolishness knows no bounds,” he scolded. “Some scoundrel sells you wisdom and you buy it. Fool, don’t you know wisdom cannot be bought?” Sure, those days they had not heard of consultants at all.

The father dragged him back to the market and got him to point out Vipul’s stall. He then went up to Vipul and protested. “You’ve taken advantage of my son’s foolishness,” he screamed. “I’ll take you to the king’s court and have you punished for cheating people. You *badmash!*”

“There’s no need to get upset like this,” said Vipul. “If you don’t like the quality of my stuff, then return it and take back your money.”

The rich man was very pleased at being able to undo his son’s foolishness so easily.

“Here! Take your wisdom back,” he said and threw the piece of paper on the counter.

“*Na, na!* This piece of paper is not the wisdom I sold. It is the idea that counts. Your son must promise not to use the wisdom I have given him and should always stand and watch people quarrelling,” declared Vipul.

All the people gathered there agreed with him, so the man promised



women fight. Soon, they came to blows and they scratched and smacked each other. One of them noticed Budhunath and said: “You’re my witness that she started this whole fight.”

Then the other one said: “ You must be

that his son would not use the wisdom that Vipul had sold him and took the silver rupee that Vipul returned to him.

The king of that kingdom had two wives, Roopmati and Taramati, who constantly quarrelled with each other. Each one had a maid who also fought and tried to best each other whenever a chance arose.

One day, as Budhunath wandered around the market, the two maids happened to come to the market. They went to the same vegetable seller and their eyes fell on the same pumpkin at the same time. Now each of them insisted that she would buy only that pumpkin and no other. Nothing that the vegetable seller told them made any difference.

Soon the two maids were screaming at each other. Budhunath, though foolish, was quite honest. So remembering his father’s promise to Vipul, he stood by to watch the two

my witness. She struck me first and pulled at my hair.”

Then they both recollected that they had a lot of work to do and went back to the palace. They brushed past the gorgeous beaded *toran* at the entrance and each marched angrily into her queen’s room.

There, each maid complained hard and long to her own queen and also mentioned Budhunath who was witness to their fight. The queens, all bedecked in bright *ghaghras* and shimmering jewels, went to the king and complained to him about the insolence and bad behaviour of the other’s maid and again mentioned Budhunath. So, the king called Budhunath in order to sort out the matter.

Now Budhunath was in a quandary because whatever he said would land him in trouble. His father could not think of anything either, except to

scold him for being foolish enough to hang around the two women. Budhunath's protest that because of his promise to Vipul, he had to stay there cut no ice with him. Anyway, finding no other solution, they went to Vipul to see if he had any wisdom to offer in this case. Vipul said that he had, but this time it would cost them more.

"Paanch Soi! I will take five hundred silver rupees," he said.



Seeing no other way out, the rich man agreed. Then, Vipul told Budhunath to pretend to be mad and when the king was unable to make any sense of what he said, he would let him go and the queens, too, would not be angry with him.

The rich man paid five hundred silver rupees and his son followed Vipul's advice. However, now the father and son faced another problem that they had not anticipated. The rich

man soon realised that if the king came to know that Budhunath was not really mad, they would be in deep trouble. So, back they went to complain about the quality of Vipul's advice.

"Well," said Vipul, "it was good enough advice when I gave it. Now for another five hundred, I'll tell you what to do."

So the rich man forked out another five hundred rupees and Vipul told the rich man to tell the king a story when he was in a good mood. "Then he'll laugh and forgive you," said Vipul, but warned: "But make sure he is in a good mood."

The rich man and Budhunath did just that. The king heard the story and burst into loud laughter. But he was also curious about this young man who sold wisdom and sent for him.

When Vipul appeared before the king, he said: "I believe you sell wisdom. What can you sell me?"

"But my wisdom is costly, your majesty!" Vipul warned the king.

"Oh, that's all right. How much will it cost?" asked the king.

"Paanch hazar! The cost of wisdom for you, sire, will be five thousand rupees," said Vipul boldly.

"Well, I don't mind the price if the quality is really good," declared the king.

Vipul then wrote his advice on a

piece of paper and gave it to the king. It said: **‘Think deeply before you do anything’**

The king really liked the piece of advice and had it written up everywhere in his palace: next to the beautiful *Anjar paintings*, on the traditional embroidered hand fans that were used by everyone in the palace, and on the painted clayware. He gave Vipul five thousand rupees.

A while after this happened, the king took ill. Rani Roopmati and the minister conspired to get rid of him and bribed the doctor to add poison to the king’s medicine. As the king was about to drink the medicine, he happened to see the line written on the wall: **“Think deeply before you do anything.”** Once again he was struck by the wisdom of the words and kept staring at them thoughtfully, instead of drinking his medicine.

Glossary:

Shun che: What is this?

Hun khareedeesh: I’ll buy it.

Khoob aabhaar: Thank you

very much

Badmash: rogue

Naa: no

Paanch so: five hundred

Paanch hazaar: five thousand

Maaf karjo, raja sahaab: pardon me, your highness.

The doctor, who was already feeling quite guilty, was alarmed by the king’s thoughtful demeanour. He was convinced that the king was suspicious about the medicine. He thought it would be better to confess before he was discovered, and fell at the king’s feet: *“Maaf karjo, raja sahaab!”*

The king was surprised at first, but when he got to know what had happened, he got very angry. He called the queen and the minister and banished them and the doctor from the country.

Then he sent for Vipul and made him his minister. Vipul helped him rule the kingdom wisely and well for many years after that.

*Retold by Uma Raman
(Source : Folk Tales of India
by A.K. Ramanujam)*



Kathakali

THE INDIAN BALLET

Gods and goddesses, demons and spirits, swirl around with amazing energy. The stage is dark and sombre but for the solitary tall *kuthuvilaku* (brass lamp) and the brilliant costumes and facial make-up of the dancers.

Welcome to a performance of Kathakali, a dance form native to Kerala in South India. Kathakali literally means 'story-play'. It is a classical dance-drama, colourful and dramatic in content and character. The 300-year-old art form is a blend of dance, drama, and martial arts. Most of its elements and choreography have been influenced by a 9th century art form of Kerala called Koodiyattam, recently recognised by the UNESCO as a heritage art form.

The dancers usually enact scenes from our epics and mythology.

Surprisingly for a dance-drama form, the Kathakali dancers do not speak a word! While a group of narrators recite the story in the form of a song, and the dancers

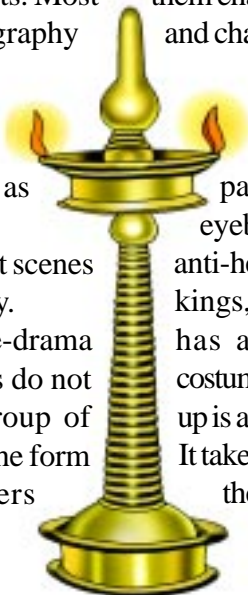
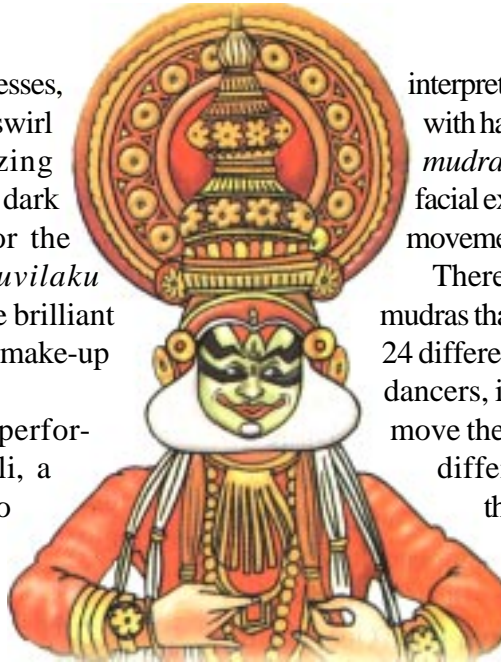
interpret the narrative lines with hand gestures called *mudras*, combined with facial expressions and eye movements.

There are at least 700 mudras that are combined in 24 different ways. The best dancers, it is believed, can move their eye-balls in 17 different ways! And there are eight ways to move the eyebrows, and eight for the eyelids. One wonders how they manage it.

Till recently Kathakali was danced only by men. You'll be surprised to see them enact a female role with elegance and charm.

Facial Make-up

Dancers have their faces painted to emphasise their lips, eyebrows, and eyelashes. Heroes, anti-heroes, villains, demons, sages, kings, and women – each character has a prescribed make-up and costume. Donning the colourful make-up is a very time-consuming exercise. It takes up to four to five hours before the play.





Green stands for the good, red for valour and ferocity, black for evil and primitiveness, yellow for wonder, and white for purity. Combinations of these colours suggest the temperament and mood of the character in the play.



The dancer's eyes are elongated with black *kaajal*. A few seeds of a flower called *chundapoo* are put into the eye. This makes the eyes glow red in the light of the *kuthuvilaku*, and the effect is marvellous.

Before applying the make-up, the performers wash their faces thoroughly, and a holy mark of sandal paste is put on the forehead before they lie down on the floor to enable the make-up artiste to work on their face.



Kathakali dancers paint their faces with natural dyes. Are you wondering how the green, yellow, red, white, and black colours are obtained? They are got from natural products, which are ground and mixed with coconut oil for use.

White is got from a lime (calcium carbonate) paste.

For red, turmeric is mixed with lime.

Green leaves are mashed and mixed with lime to get a green colour.

The powder of burnt coconut shells is mixed with coconut oil to obtain black.

Turmeric powder gives the yellow tint.

The dance dramas were traditionally performed on open platforms at temples. And the play used to start late in the night and conclude by the early hours of dawn. After he founded the Kerala Kalamandalam in Cheruthuruthy, poet Vallathol Narayana Menon rejuvenated Kathakali, bringing in innovations. Nowadays, performances are held in auditoriums in the evenings, and even Biblical stories (e.g. Mary of Magdalene) are adapted for presentation in Kathakali.

Opinions, unsolicited

You must have heard of the Sufi saints. Sufism is an Islamic tradition, and the Sufis have been known for their teaching of a gentle path of love and universal brotherhood. But, who has not faced criticism in life? And the Sufis were no exception.

In a village there once lived a young man who was always speaking against the Sufi saints. Everyone in the village was tired of listening to this pesky self-opinionated fellow. But as he enjoyed getting into long debates and would go on and on with his

terrible theories, nobody dared get into an argument with him.

At last, a Sufi saint who lived in the village decided that it was time the young man was taught the value of his opinions. He took off a ring from his finger and gave it to him. “Young man, please take this to the market and sell it for Rs. 500.” The youth was so confident that he could do it that he trotted off to the market immediately.

Alas, he found no takers for the ring. “I’ll give you Rs. 10 for it,” said a woman, doubtfully turning it over in her hand. “And that too because my child wants it.” He went back to the saint with the ring. Now the saint sent him to a jeweller and asked him to find out what the ring would fetch. The jeweller weighed it and examined it, and said he would give Rs. 5,000 for it.

When he returned and reported the matter to the saint, the Sufi laughed softly and said: “My son, you know as much about Sufis as that woman in the market knew about this ring.” The young man had learnt his lesson.



Dussehra

The festival of triumph

For colour, pomp, and gaiety, few Indian festivals can surpass Dussehra. This festival is celebrated in the month of *Ashwin* in the Hindu calendar, which occurs in September-October. Traditionally, Dussehra commemorates the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon, Mahishasura.

According to the myth, Mahishasura

received a boon from Lord Siva, which ensured that no god could kill him. Armed with such enormous power, he started destroying innocent people. The gods then decided to create an all-powerful goddess to kill the demon king. Thus Durga came into being.

Armed with supernatural strength and special weapons given by the gods, Durga confronted Mahishasura. In the fierce battle that followed, the goddess killed the demon.

In some parts of the country, Dussehra is a nine-day festival, which begins on the holy day of the Mahalaya Amavasya. The nine nights of the festival are called "*Navaratri*" (*Nav*-nine; *Ratri*-nights). The festival ends on the tenth day, which is called *Vijayadasami* and it is considered an auspicious day to start any new venture.

In certain parts of the country, the last day is also counted as part of the festival, making it a ten day celebration known as '*Dasara*' (*Das*-ten, *ra-ratri*-night).



Durga Puja in West Bengal

Doesn't your mother go on a holiday to her parents' house now and then? The Bengalis believe that Durga, the mother goddess, with members of her family, goes home to her parental house in the Himalayas, every year. It is this annual visit of Durga that is celebrated as Durga Puja in West Bengal.

Huge idols of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesa and Kartik are housed in brilliantly lit, splendidly decorated colourful *pandals* all over the state. The idol of Durga, astride a ferocious looking lion, with the slain Mahishasura at her feet, is also a symbol of the victory of good over evil.

The *puja* begins on the seventh day, which is known as Mahasaptami, and reaches a climax on Maha ashtami or the eighth day. The traditional *puja* is accompanied by the beating of drums and cymbals.

On Vijayadasami, the idols are taken for immersion in decorated vehicles in a long, colourful procession, with music and fanfare.

The women of Bengal give a send off to the goddess with a traditional custom called *sindhur-khella*. The women in the neighbourhood gather at the pandals on Vijayadasami and dab the forehead of the idol with

vermillion. They place a piece of sweetmeat in her mouth and put a *paan* in her hand, wishing her a farewell till her visit next year. The women also exchange *sindhur* with each other as a gesture of goodwill.

Dasara in Mysore



Mysore is famous for its annual Dasara celebrations. It is believed that this festival was celebrated in the Vijayanagara empire at Hampi in the 14th century during the reign of Krishnadevaraya.

The last Vijayanagara ruler handed over the charge of Mysore to Mumtaz Ali Krishna Raja Wodeyar. Dasara during the Wodeyar's reign,

in the pre-British days, was a grand occasion. A parade of the army and eminent people in Wodeyar's service took place in the evening. Renowned musicians, dancers, wrestlers, and artisans joined the parade; so did decorated elephants, camels, and horses. Cannons, rifles, and carriages made of gold and silver, added to the richness and grandeur of the procession.

The Maharaja joined the ceremonies, seated on a golden throne carried by the royal elephant. The Maharaja would offer *puja* in the palace grounds. At the head of the parade would be the auspicious *Nandi Kamba*, a sacred folk symbol. There were tableaux, and dances that stopped and performed at intervals. Thousands of people lined up on both sides of the roads to watch the display.

Though the pomp and opulence have faded from the Mysore parade down the years, the Dasara celebrations continue to be a grand affair.

Dussehra in Himachal Pradesh

The Kulu valley of **Himachal Pradesh** has its own characteristic colourful way of observing Dussehra. The hill folk celebrate Dussehra with a grand community function. Gold and silver idols of Lord Raghunath are carried out in a procession.

Ram Lila



In the northern states, Dussehra is associated with Lord Rama's victory over the evil Ravana, who had abducted his consort, Sita. *Ram Lila*, the story of Rama, is retold through folk play and music, and huge effigies of the demon king Ravana, his brother Kumbhakarna, and his son Indrajit are set fire to.

Navaratri in Tamil Nadu

In **Tamil Nadu**, the festival is popularly known as *Navaratri*. A special attraction is the display of dolls and artifacts (*Bomma Kolu*) in every home. These dolls are often passed on from generation to generation. Both contemporary dolls and figures of gods



and goddesses are displayed. There are also sets of dolls depicting themes, like village scenes, marriage scenes, music bands, and scenes at airports, schools, markets, and harbours.

For very young children, Vijaya-dasami is a significant day. They begin their education and learning on this day, as it is believed that anything begun on this day will be successfully continued.

Navaratri in Gujarat

In **Gujarat**, Navaratri is a time for worship and joy. Women in the traditional brilliantly coloured *cholis* and *ghaghras* gracefully dance the Garba around an earthen lamp, their fluid movements accompanied by gentle rhythmic claps of the hand.

Young men and women wear bright coloured *chaniya cholis* and *kedias*, the traditional dress of Gujarat.

Myths say that Lord Krishna and the *gopikas* perfected a dance form that is popularly known as *raas nritya*. There are several versions of the *raas*. *Dandiya* is one such form. The young dancers keep rhythm with the beat of small sticks called *dandiya*. In another variety of this dance, the dancers mark rhythm to the clap of palms, and this form of dance is called *Garba*.

The *Garba*, which is perhaps the most popular Gujarati folk dance form, is said to owe its origin to Usha, wife of Aniruddha, grandson of Lord Krishna.



*Have a
gala time!*

What are festivals without colourful festoons, streamers, and wall hangings? Here is a wall hanging made of coloured paper.

Pick up paper sheets of three different colours. Red, blue and yellow colours have been used here. You also need a ruler, a pencil, a pair of scissors, glue, and needle and thread.

1. Cut seven strips from each sheet in different sizes and glue the ends of each strip to make a loop. Blue: 15 x 1 cm, yellow: 12.5 x 1 cm, red: 10 x 1 cm
2. Put together the narrow end of the blue loops and sew them at the centre. Glue their sides where they touch each other.

3. Fix the red loops inside the blue ones. The yellow loops are glued in the space between two blue loops.
4. Sew a thread into one of the loops and hang the finished pattern on a wall. Or let it dangle from the ceiling of your room.

Be daring and use different materials of varying colours, and measurements to make eye-catching patterns.

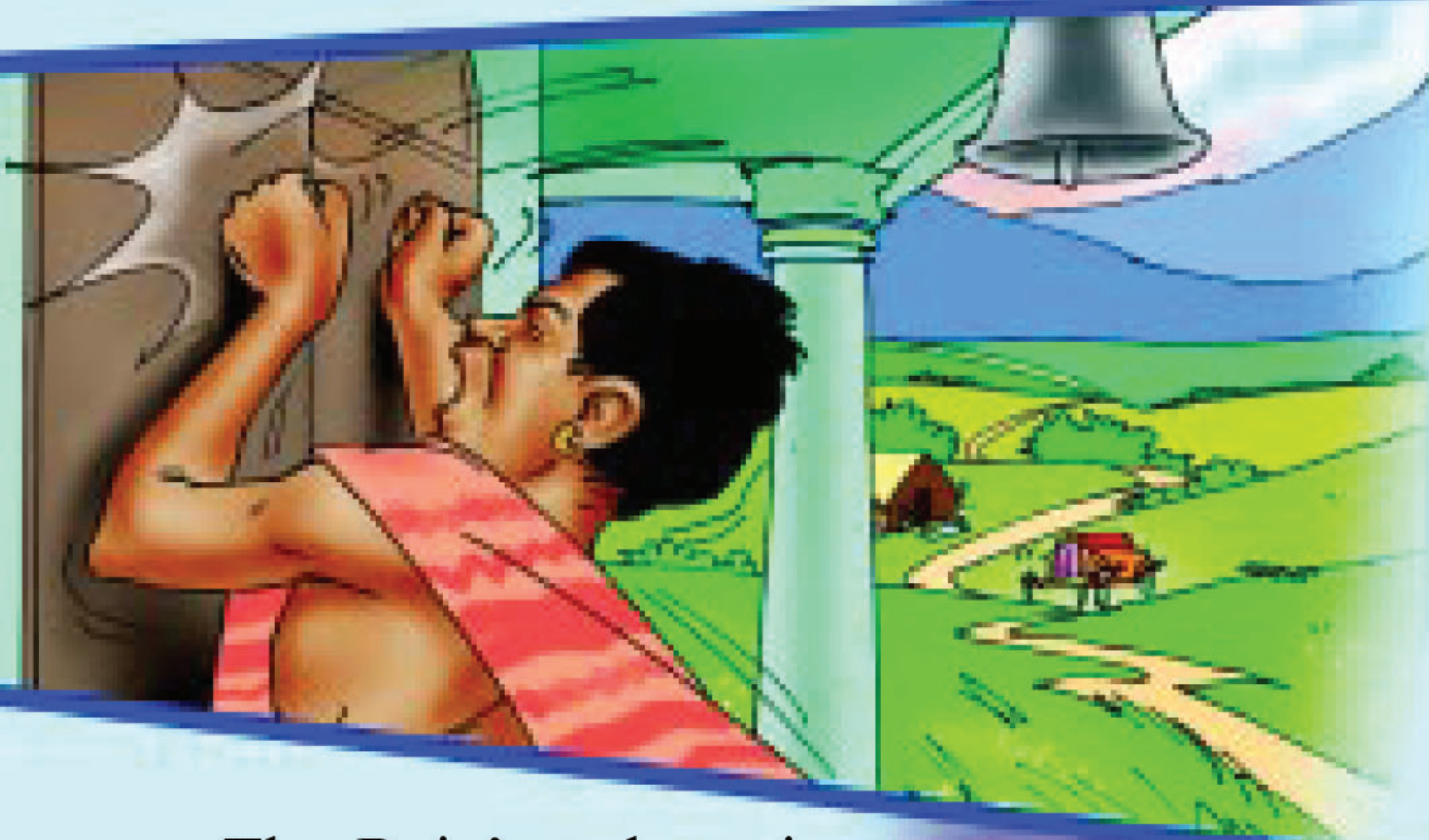
Have a great Dussehra !

Men of Wit - Jadumani



The 19th century Oriya poet, Jadumani's father Mukund was a gifted sculptor. He carved an image of Krishna. "Where shall we take this Radhanath?" asked Jadumani. "We'll build a shrine," said his father.

Mukund spent his wealth in building the shrine. When he died, there was no money left even to perform his last rites. Jadumani was in a fix. 'Only the Raja can help me! But how can I approach him? What shall I do?' he wondered.



It was already noon. The deity had been offered Bhog, and the priest had left after closing the doors of the temple. Jadumani suddenly remembered. 'Ah! It's time for the Raja of Nayagarah to pass this way.' He ran up to the temple and began banging on the doors. "Brother Radhanath! Wake up, please!"

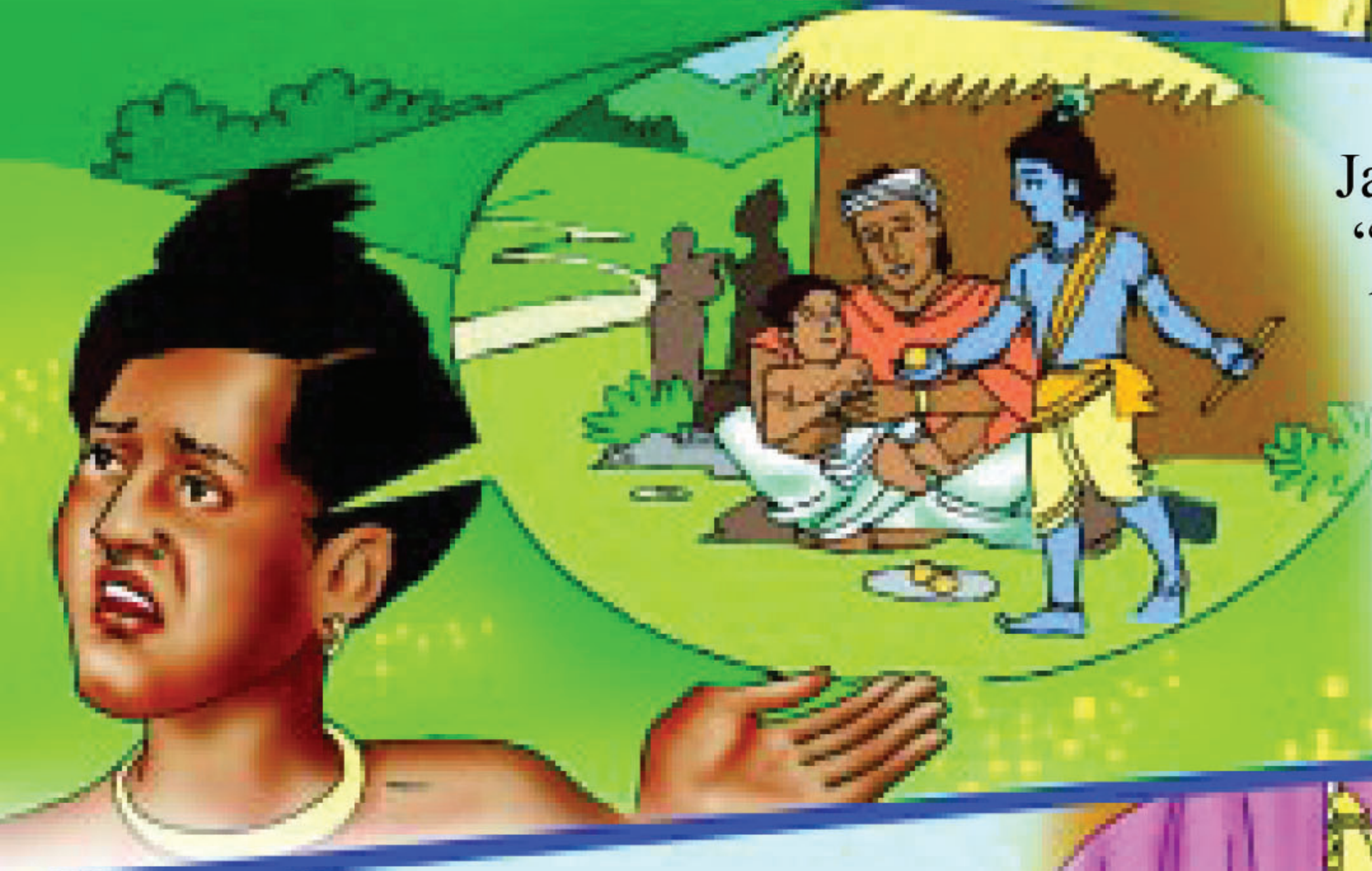
The Raja's palanquin came that way. He was shocked at the sight of a man banging on the doors of the temple. He asked one of the palanquin-bearers to go and find out who he was.





As the Raja waited in the palanquin, the bearer went up to Jadumani. “The Raja!” he exclaimed and mumbled something to the palanquin-bearer.

Jadumani followed the palanquin-bearer. “Your majesty, he’s Jadumani, son of Mukund who sculpted the idol of Radhanath.” The Raja spoke harshly. “What do you think you’re doing, young man? Have you gone mad?”



Jadumani bowed low and said: “This Radhanath is my elder brother; my father gave birth to him before I was born. As the elder son, isn’t it his duty to perform my father’s last rites, your majesty? But he’s not waking up!”

The Raja pulled out a pouch of coins. “Your Radhanath will not wake up now. Here, take this, and don’t delay the last rites. Come to my court after the rites are over. I would have enjoyed your wit more if it had not been on such a sombre moment.”



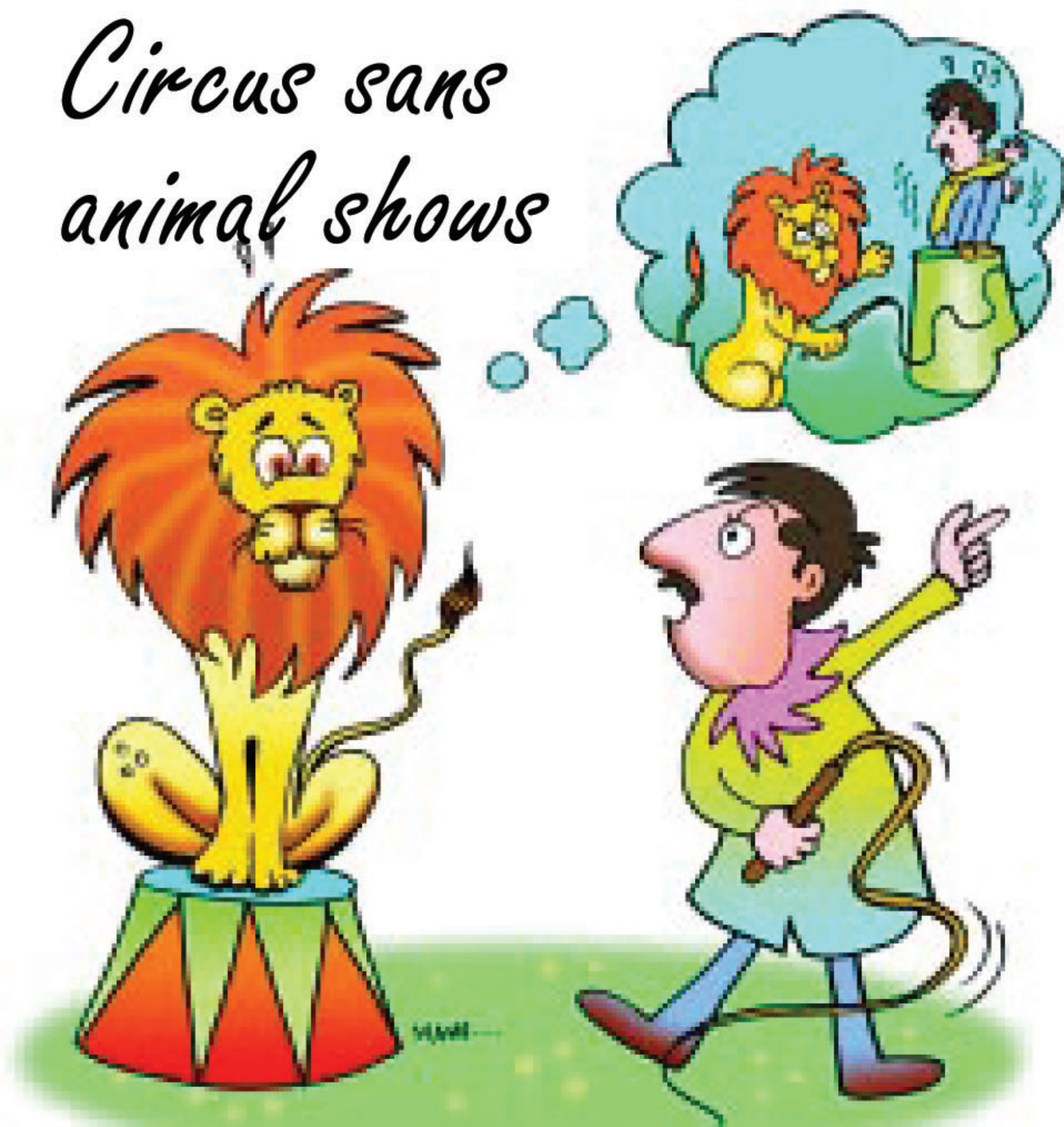
NEWS FLASH

Real, nothing fishy

It is all about a fish, no doubt. A black marlin swam 13,000 km in four years. This 4-year odyssey started sometime in 1996. Beryl Yates was on board a cruise boat when she caught the fish and attached a tag to it before releasing it in the sea off Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Last May the fish fell into the net of fishermen in Quepos, Costa Rica, in Central America. By then the fish had swum through the Pacific Ocean. The fishermen removed the tag and sent it to a US researcher who, in turn, passed on the news to Beryl Yates.



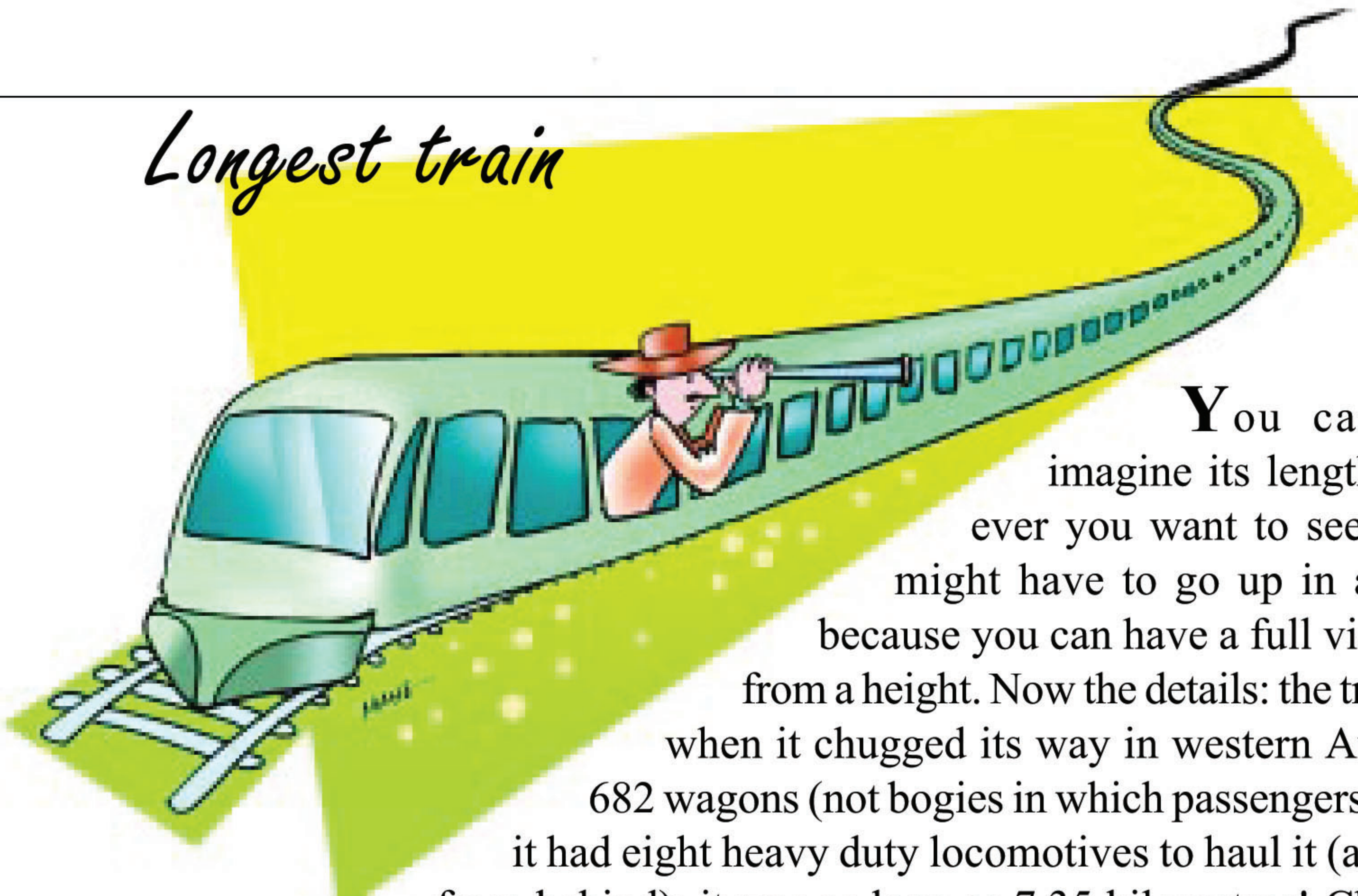
Circus sans animal shows



Not all animals, however. The ban is only on making the lion, tiger, bear, panther, and monkey perform in circuses in India. The Supreme Court has accepted the ban imposed by the Union government. The decision of the apex court came when it rejected an appeal filed by the Circus Federation of India and the owners of some circuses. The Supreme Court felt that these animals are likely to suffer cruelty during training. The final ruling has come about after a protracted legal fight lasting forty years.

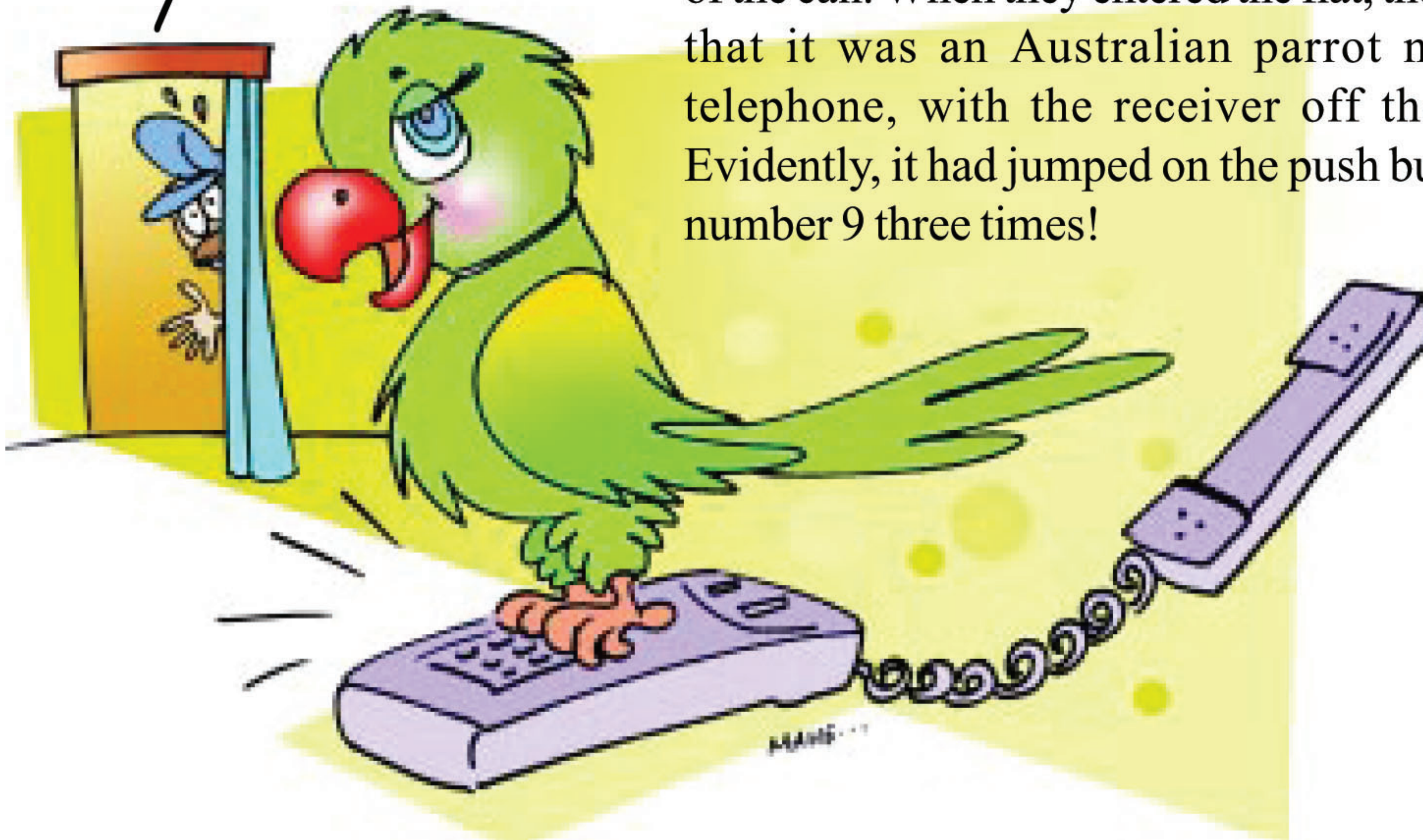
Chandamama

Longest train



You can only imagine its length, for if ever you want to see it, you might have to go up in a plane, because you can have a full view only from a height. Now the details: the train had, when it chugged its way in western Australia, 682 wagons (not bogies in which passengers travel); it had eight heavy duty locomotives to haul it (and push from behind); it was as long as 7.35 kilometres! Chugging may not be the correct expression; let's say the train was snaking its way!

SOS from a parrot



In England, the telephone number for Emergency is 999. The Manchester police the other day received a call and traced the source of the call. When they entered the flat, they found that it was an Australian parrot near the telephone, with the receiver off the hook. Evidently, it had jumped on the push button for number 9 three times!

The day the jalebis grew on trees

Arjun was the smartest young man in the village. He was deft and clever with his hands. He could mend fences, stitch garments, carve toys out of wood, and do a hundred other interesting things. Sadly, one could not say the same for his wife, Rathi. She was neither clever nor capable. On the contrary, she was a chatterbox and loved nothing more than gathering the gossip going round the village. Arjun was often embarrassed by her words and behaviour, but for all

that, she did not mean any harm, and he loved her.

One day, Arjun's wife wanted to eat potatoes, but there weren't any in the house. So, Arjun promised to dig out some fresh potatoes from a patch that grew wild in the nearby woods. He made his way carefully to the potato patch and began digging. Ah, but this did not feel like any potato! It was hard! What could it be? His spade had struck something hard. He dug deeper - and gasped. A pot full of gleaming gold coins! Where did it come from?

Arjun thought quickly: the pot had not been at the spot a week back when he had dug out potatoes. It must have been buried recently - probably by a thief. Well, poor thief! Arjun thought briskly. 'He has lost his booty and I found it, so I'll keep it!' And he began walking home with it.

'Oh no!' The idea that suddenly struck him simply rooted him to the spot. 'How would I explain this to Rathi? She'd tell all her friends about it. The police may suspect that I stole it all. Who would believe

Chandamama



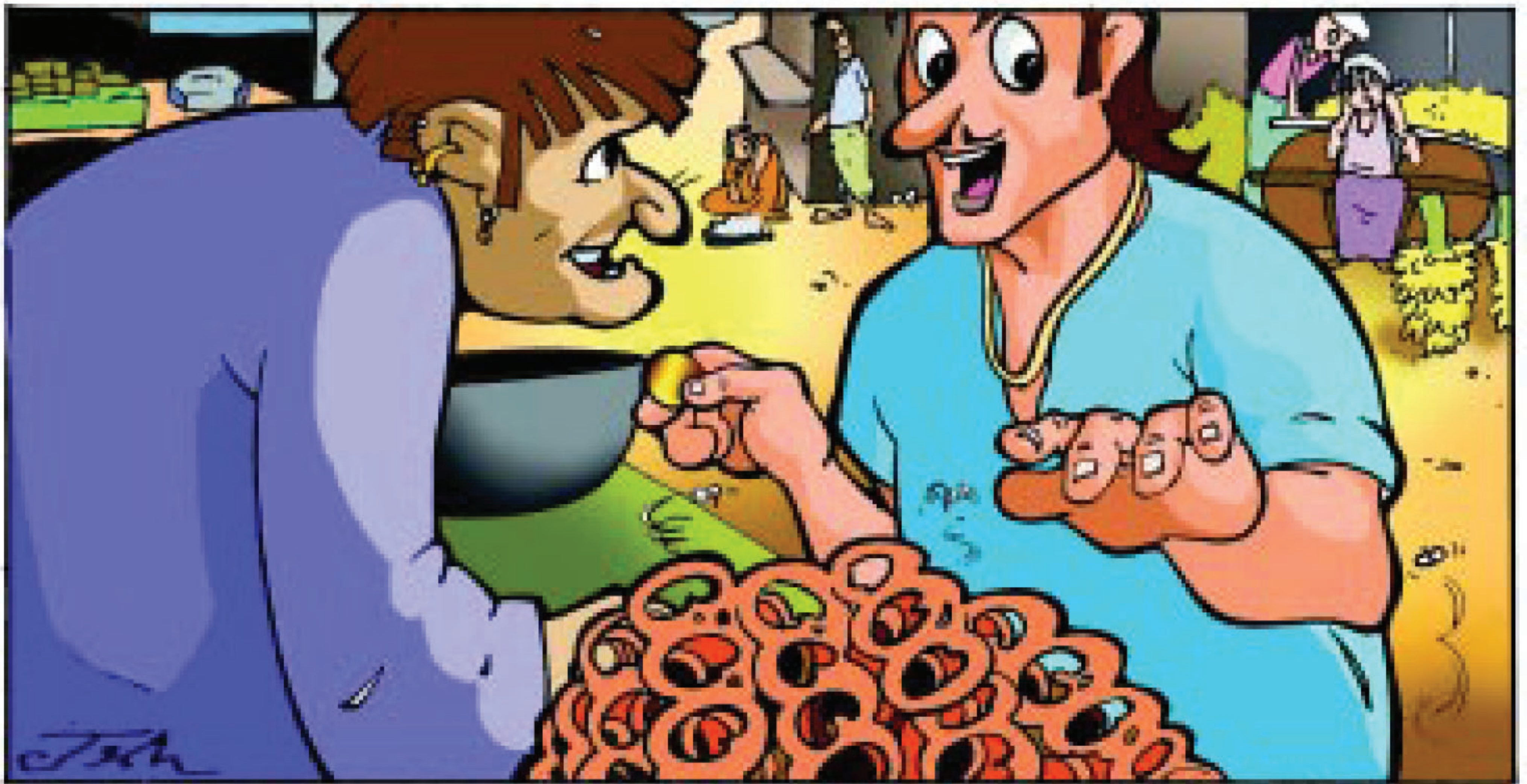
me if I say that I found it in the potato patch?’ He slowly put the pot down and began thinking.

An idea began to form in his mind. It grew and grew and took shape till it became one great action plan! He looked here and there till he came upon a scene that satisfied him thoroughly. Ha, just the thing! A big banyan tree with a hollow in its trunk. He shoved the pot of gold into the hollow, and after making sure that it was hidden from view, he moved away.

home. He went back to the forest with his load! He carried out his plan and then rushed off home.

Rathi was impatient. “I’ve finished cooking your lunch – except for the potatoes!” she said. “What took you so long?”

“The trees in the forest are full of ripe mangoes! Shall we go and collect some? I’d like to have some sweet mango *chutney* with my lunch!” answered Arjun, sidetracking her discreetly.



He went back to the village and first stopped by at the sweet shop next to the temple. “Govind *chacha*, will you please give me a kilo of *jalebis*?” Of course, Govind *chacha* was only too happy to offload *jalebis* on him.

Next Arjun stopped by at the fruit shop. He bought a huge bunch of bananas. And then – no, he did not go

Soon both were on their way to the forest. He led her to a mango tree close to the banyan tree. “Let me pluck some mangoes!” she said, but soon stopped abruptly. “There are *jalebis* on this tree!” she called out in surprise.

“Oh, but that’s not possible!” laughed Arjun, but he came up to her. Of course, it was he who had strung up *jalebis* on



the mango tree—that was part of his plan. But he pretended to be surprised and exclaimed: “O what a miracle! *Jalebis* on a mango tree!”

“Why don’t you pluck some hibiscus flowers for *puja*, while I look for another mango tree?” suggested Arjun and waved towards some hibiscus bushes. In just two minutes, there was a scream of surprise from Rathi.

“Bananas on a hibiscus bush!” she shrieked.

Arjun knew they would be there. After all, it was he who had tied them there. But he looked ever so surprised when she came running up to him.

“I found these bananas on the hibiscus bush!” she said, thrusting a

couple of ripe yellow bananas into his hands.

“Jalebis on a mango tree and bananas on a hibiscus bush! It’s a day for miracles!” he answered and casually leaned against the big banyan tree. He ran his eyes over the tree and jumped up, as if in surprise. “Another miracle!” he shouted.

“What’s that?” asked Rathi excitedly.

“There’s a pot in the hollow of the trunk!” he exclaimed and pulled out the pot.

“Gold!” she gasped in fascination. They carried the pot back home.

“Now remember, not a word to anyone!” he warned her, though he knew quite well that the news would be all over the place in just hours.

“Of course, I won’t talk about it at all!” she promised – in good faith!

But she was tempted to confide in her friend, Geeta, whom she swore to secrecy. Geeta told her very best friend, who told her sister-in-law, who told her cousin, who told her neighbour. And in just an hour, the *daroga* and the inspector in the police station had heard of it.

“Bring that fellow Arjun here! We must investigate this serious matter of the lorry load of gold that was dumped in his garden last night!” said the

inspector, and the *daroga* gave him a smart salute before marching off to carry out his orders. Did you notice how a small pot of gold had suddenly become a lorry load of gold?

Anyway, Arjun and his wife were led to the police station by the frowning *daroga*.

“What’s this I hear?” began the inspector, looking at them fiercely. “A lorry came and dumped a load of gold coins in your garden last night?”

“Lorry load?” Rathi was stunned. “No, sir. We found a small pot of gold, that’s all!” Arjun remained silent.

“A pot of gold? Hmm, where did you find it?” asked the inspector in disbelief.

“All kinds of miracles happened this morning, sir,” she chattered.

“Miracles?” the inspector said, rather quizzically.

“We found jalebis growing on a

mango tree..” she paused for breath and the inspector stared at her blankly.

“Jalebis on a mango tree?” he repeated.

“Yes, sir, and we found bananas growing on a hibiscus bush!” she went on.

“Bananas on a hibiscus bush!” The inspector thought she was quite mad.

“And we found a pot of gold in the trunk of a banyan tree!” she ended her tale.

The inspector looked at her husband pityingly. He was convinced that she was quite mad. “Is that so?” he asked gently. “Never mind. Go home now. Take good care of her, my good man!” This last comment was meant for Arjun.

Arjun and Rathi walked back home, richer by a pot of gold. “What did the inspector mean by all that?” asked Rathi innocently.



Know Your India

Quiz

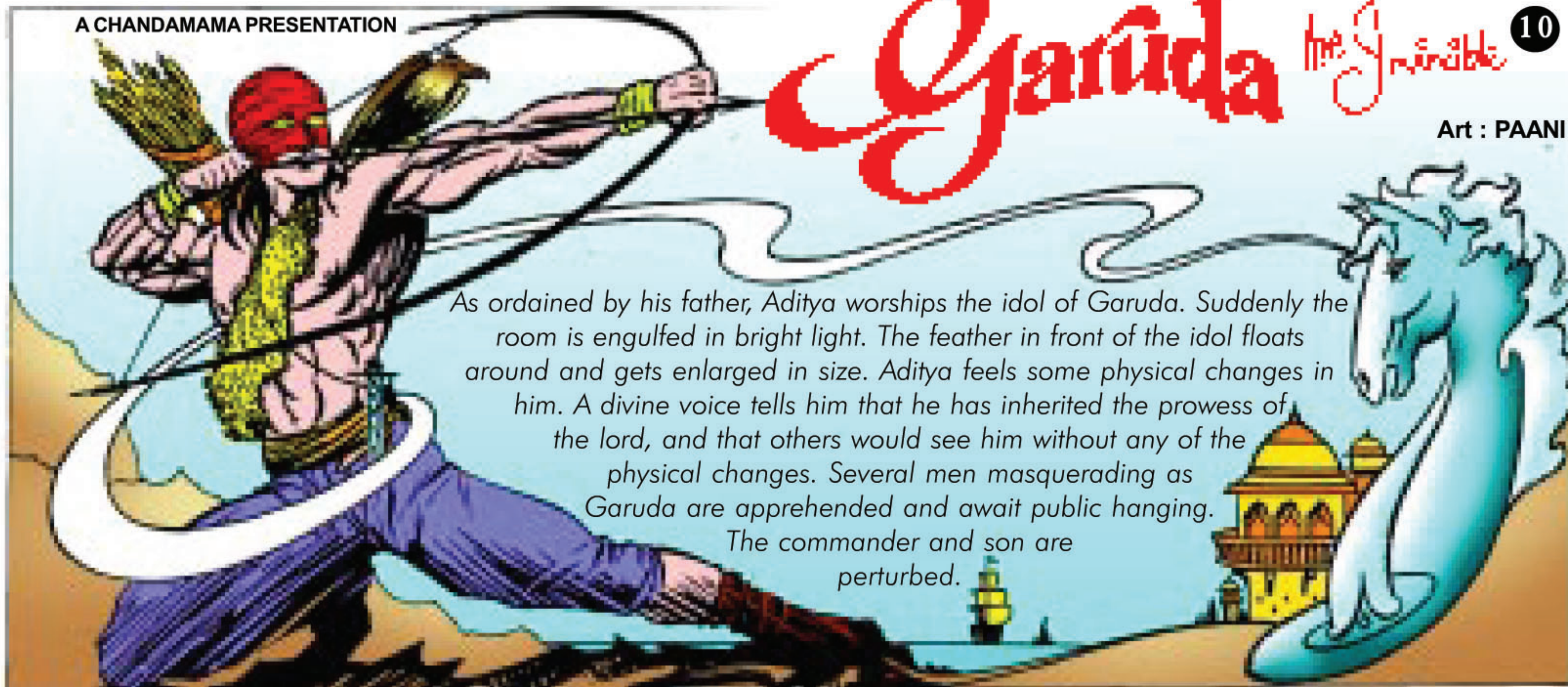
The season of festivals has started. Some of them have religious significance; some are harvest festivals; while some others have a social meaning. This month's quiz is based on some of the popular festivals of India. Try to identify them.

1. Which festival is associated with one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu?
2. A festival marks the triumphant return of Rama to Ayodhya at the end of fourteen years' exile in the forest and killing of Ravana. Which is this festival? On what date does it occur in the year 2001?
3. Children are initiated to learning on a particular day. Which? The Bengalis worship the Goddess of Learning on a different festival day. Which?
4. Which two festivals bring brothers and sisters closer?
5. On what day do the Parsis celebrate the birthday of their Prophet?
6. The Muslims celebrate the Prophet's birthday, which is known by another name. What is that name?
7. What is the significance of Easter?
8. Buddha Purnima or Baisakh Purnima has a three-fold significance. What are they?
9. On a festival day, women folk in Tamil Nadu boil rice and allow it to spill out of the pot. Which festival is this?
10. Makar Sankranti is associated with a strange phenomenon in a temple in south India. Which is the temple? What is the phenomenon?

(Answers next month)

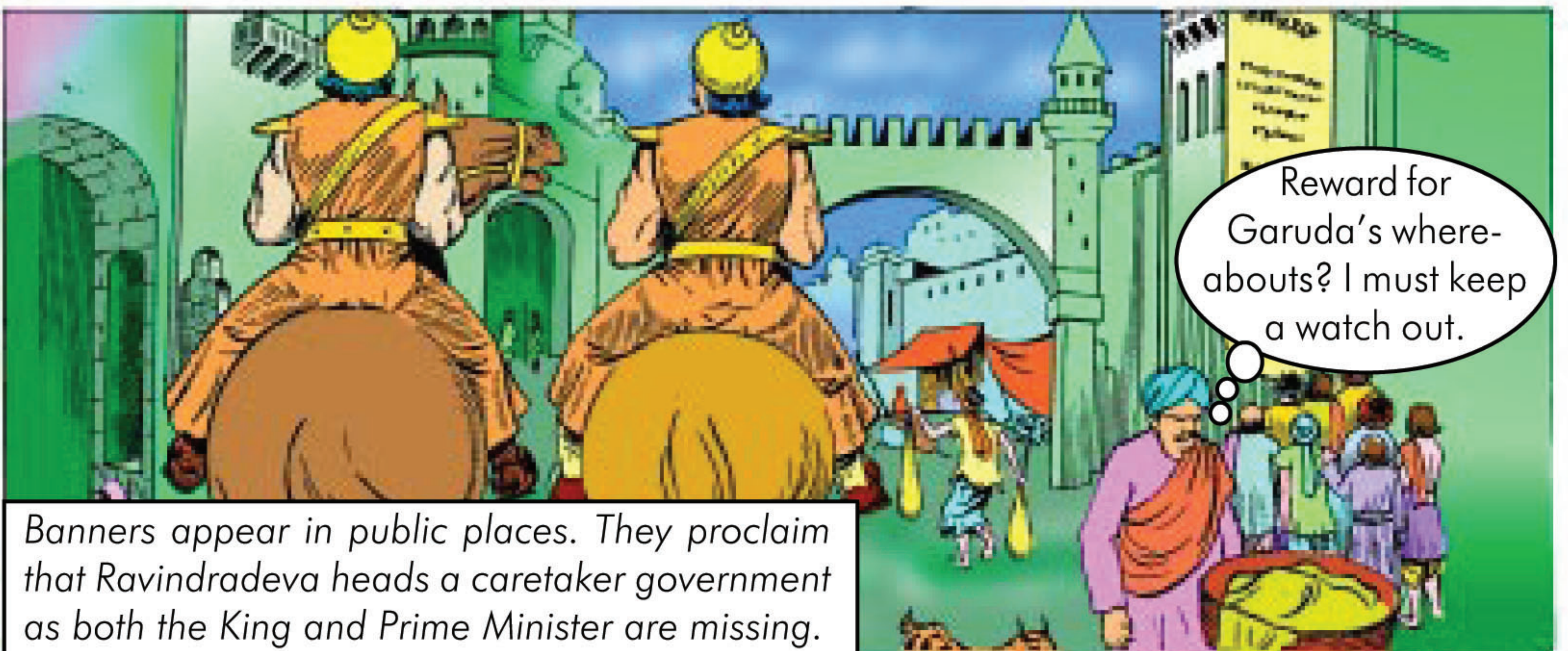
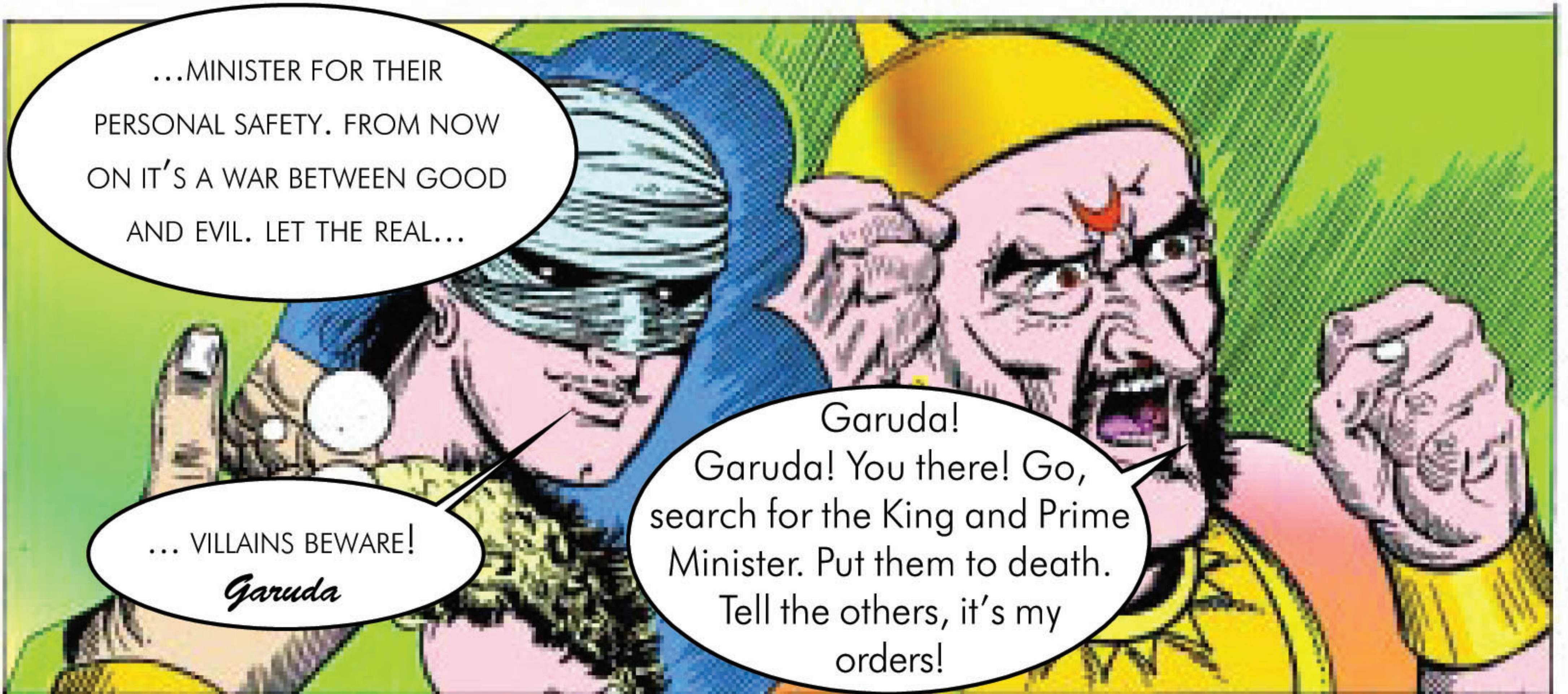
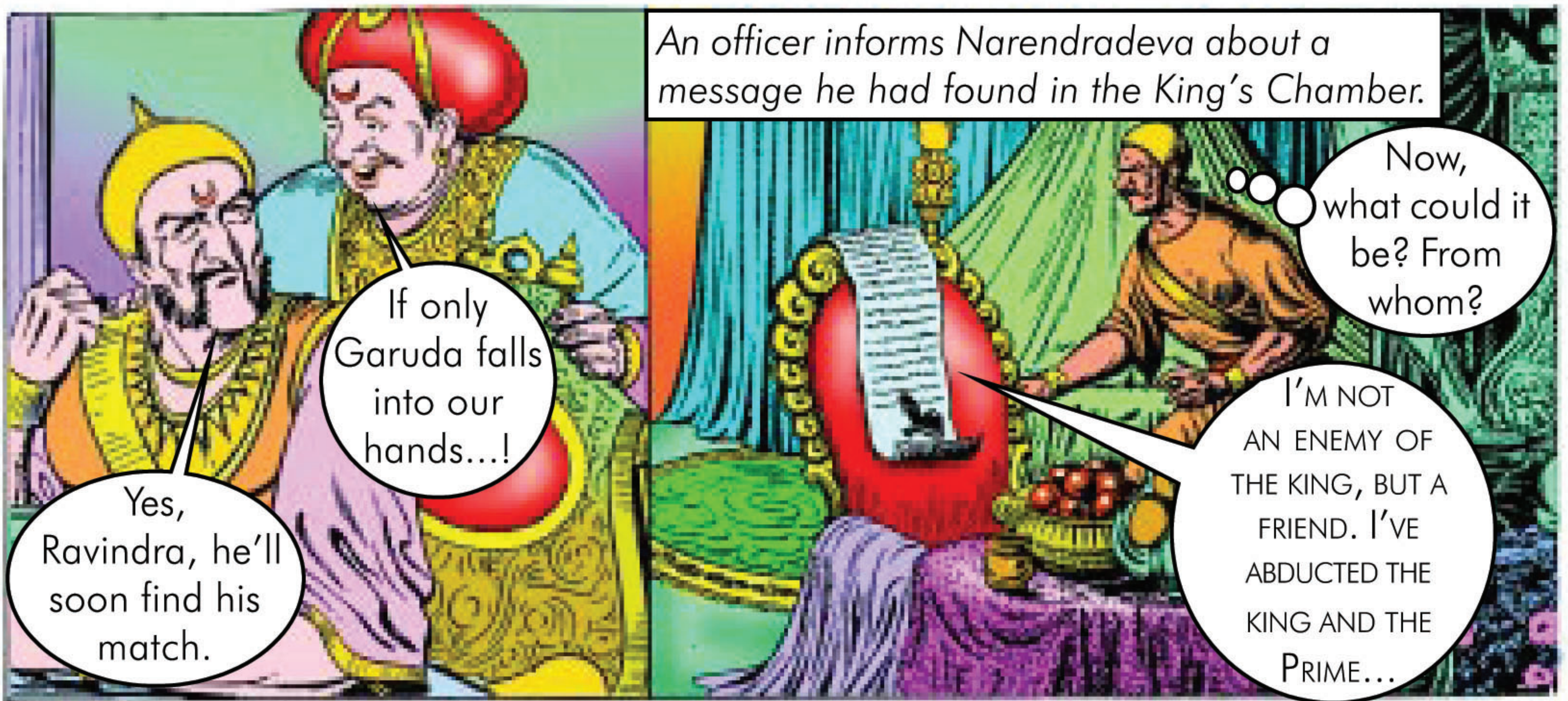
Answers to September Quiz

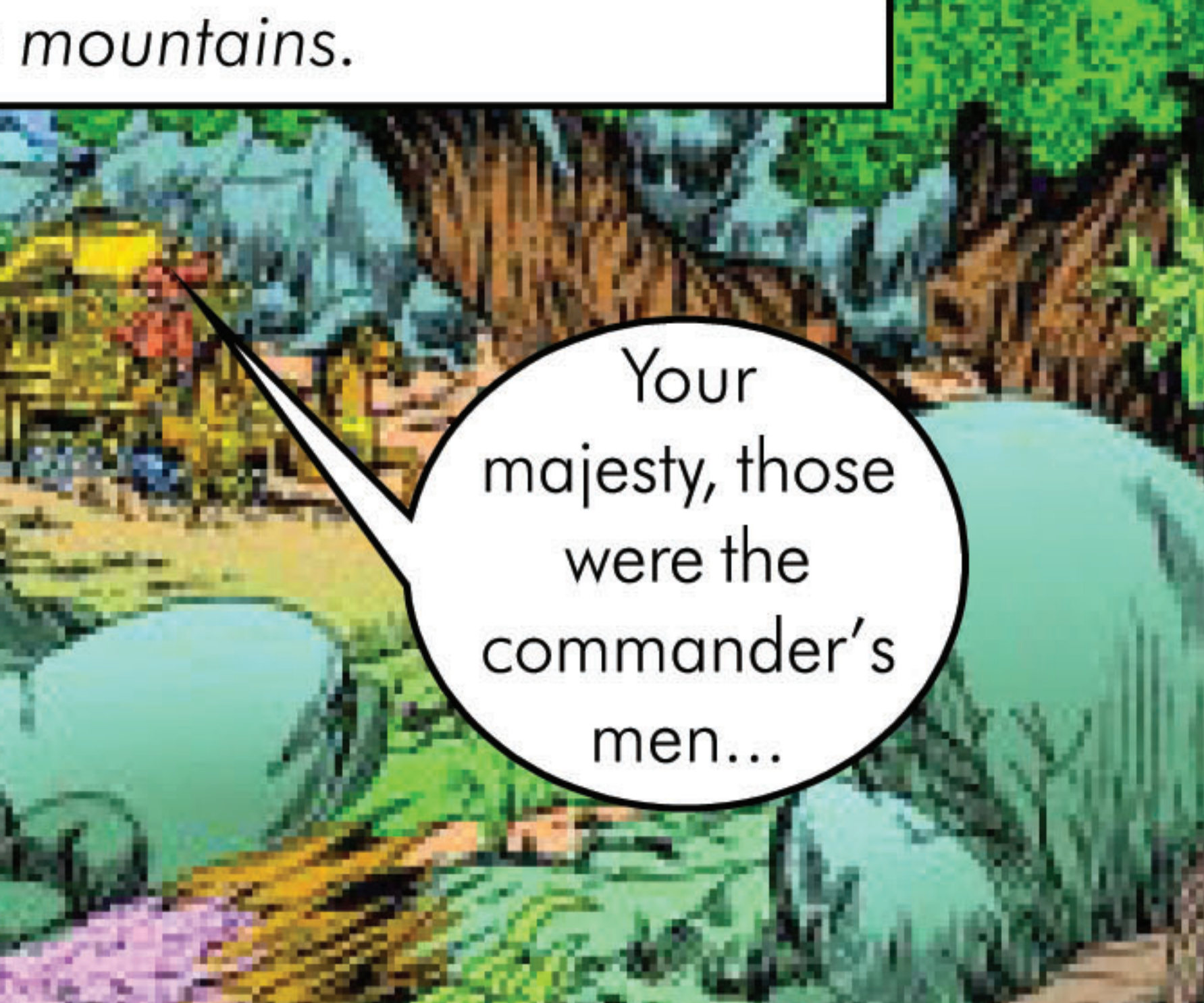
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Nalanda | 9. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad |
| 2. Rabindranath Tagore, in 1901 | 10. 1857 |
| 3. Kalakshetra, Rukmini Devi Arundale | 11. 1835 by Lord Macaulay |
| 4. 1986 | 12. Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah, who was a former Vice-Chancellor of Madras University |
| 5. Shimla | 13. Dronacharya |
| 6. Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya | 14. Kalamandalam, in Cheruthuruthy |
| 7. Aligarh Muslim University | 15. Taxila |
| 8. Basic Education or Nai Talimi | |



As ordained by his father, Aditya worships the idol of Garuda. Suddenly the room is engulfed in bright light. The feather in front of the idol floats around and gets enlarged in size. Aditya feels some physical changes in him. A divine voice tells him that he has inherited the prowess of the lord, and that others would see him without any of the physical changes. Several men masquerading as Garuda are apprehended and await public hanging. The commander and son are perturbed.

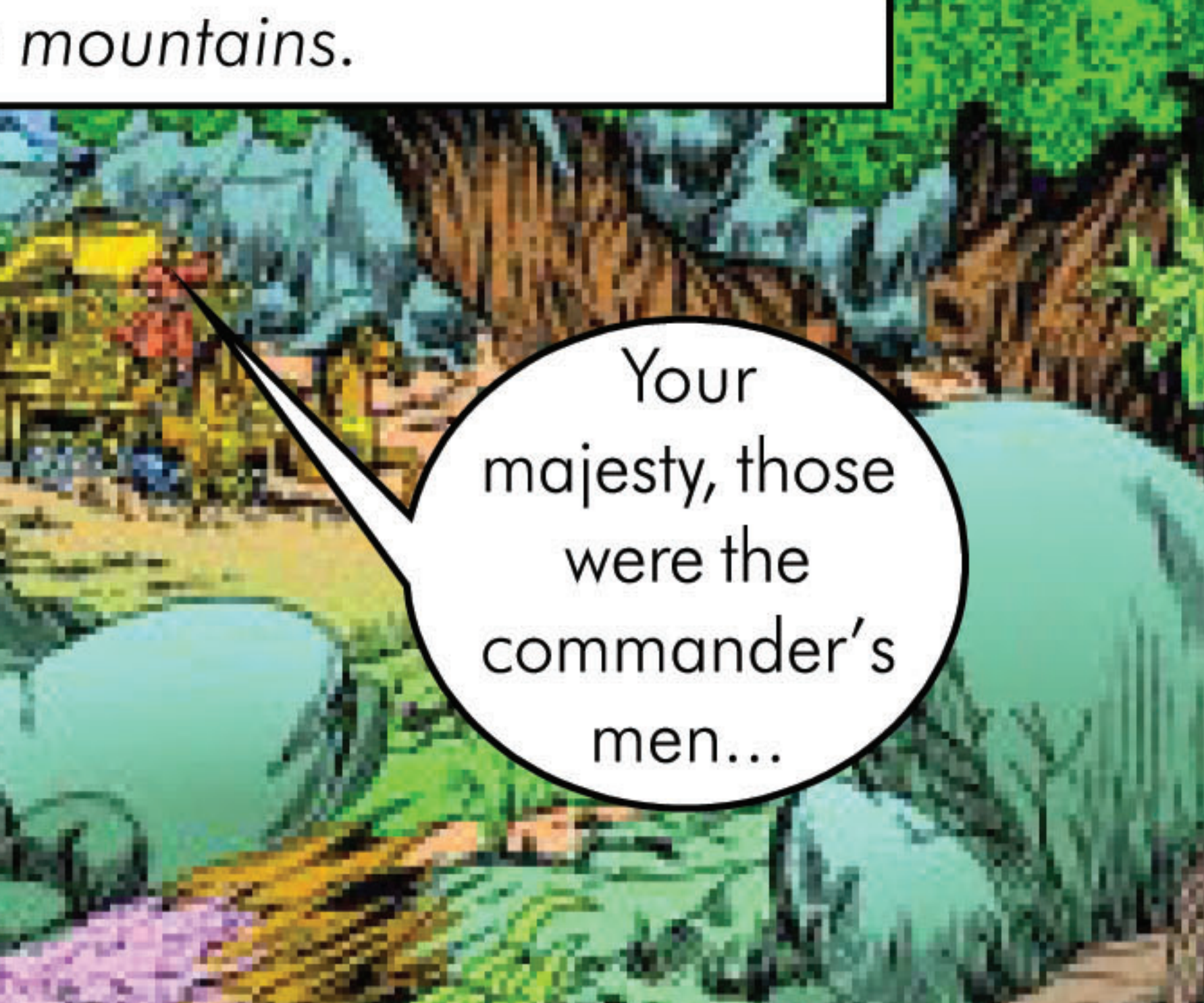




A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration of a forest. In the upper left, a yellow carriage with red accents is visible, moving along a path. The forest is filled with large, gnarled trees and lush green foliage. In the foreground, there are large, smooth, light blue rocks and a patch of purple flowers. A speech bubble with a black outline and a tail pointing towards the carriage contains the text: "Your majesty, those were the commander's men...". The overall scene is bright and detailed.

The royal carriage speeds past the mountains.

Your majesty, those were the commander's men...

A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration of a forest. In the background, a yellow carriage with red accents is visible on a path. The foreground is filled with large, smooth, light blue-green boulders and lush green foliage. A large, dark brown tree trunk is prominent on the right. A white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned in the center, containing the text: "Your majesty, those were the commander's men...". The overall scene is bright and detailed.

The royal carriage speeds past the mountains.

Your majesty, those were the commander's men...

...masquerading as Garuda. They were going round...

...assaulting people

...killing them

...setting fire to houses

...committing all sorts of crimes...

...assaulting people

...assaulting people

...killing them

...setting fire to houses

...committing all sorts of crimes...

...assaulting people

...killing them

...setting fire to houses

...committing all sorts of crimes...

...assaulting people

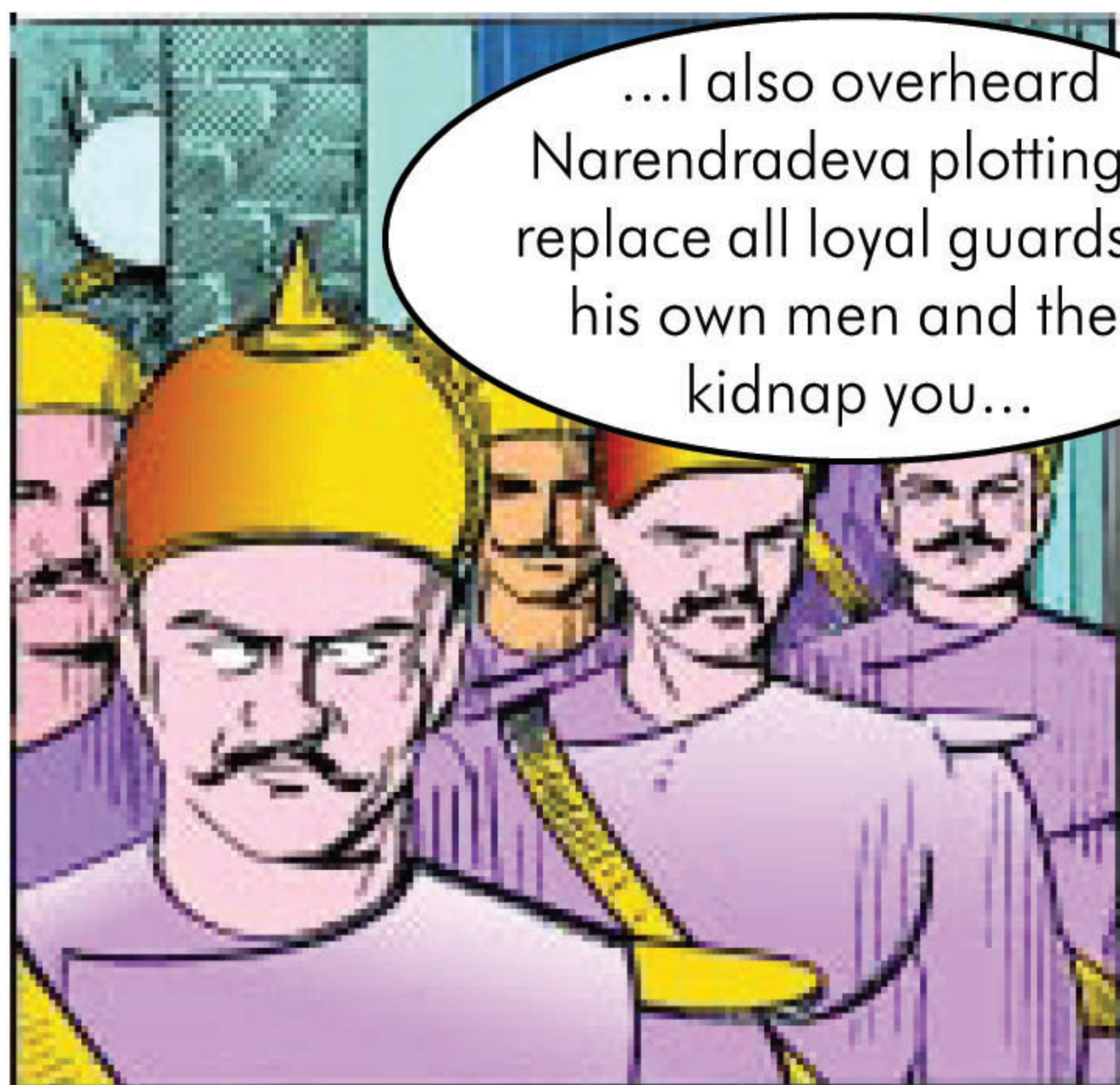
...assaulting people

...killing them

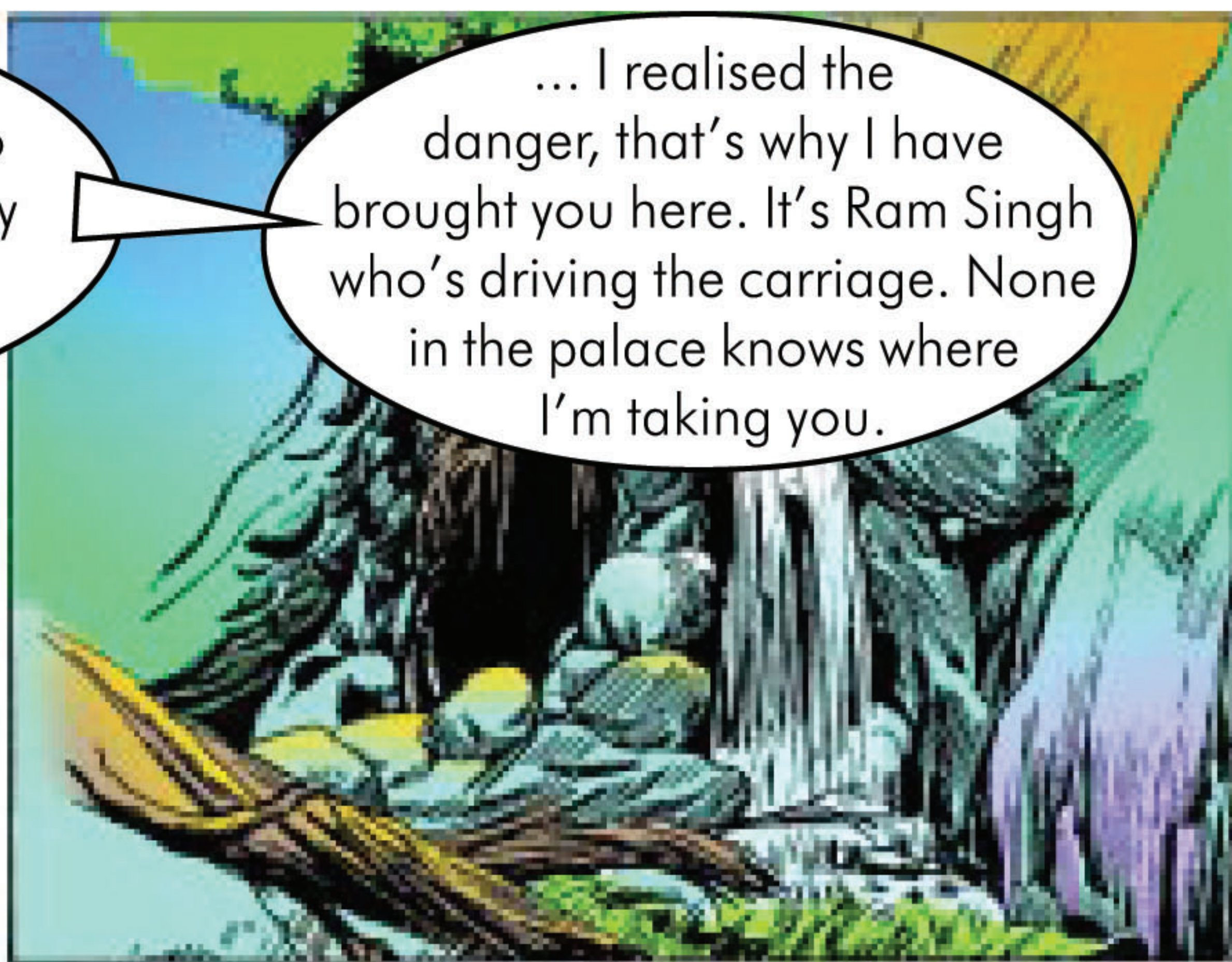
...setting fire to houses

...committing all sorts of crimes...

...assaulting people



...I also overheard Narendradeva plotting to replace all loyal guards by his own men and then kidnap you...



... I realised the danger, that's why I have brought you here. It's Ram Singh who's driving the carriage. None in the palace knows where I'm taking you.



This cave behind the waterfall is quite safe.

But you'll remain with me, Aditya, won't you?

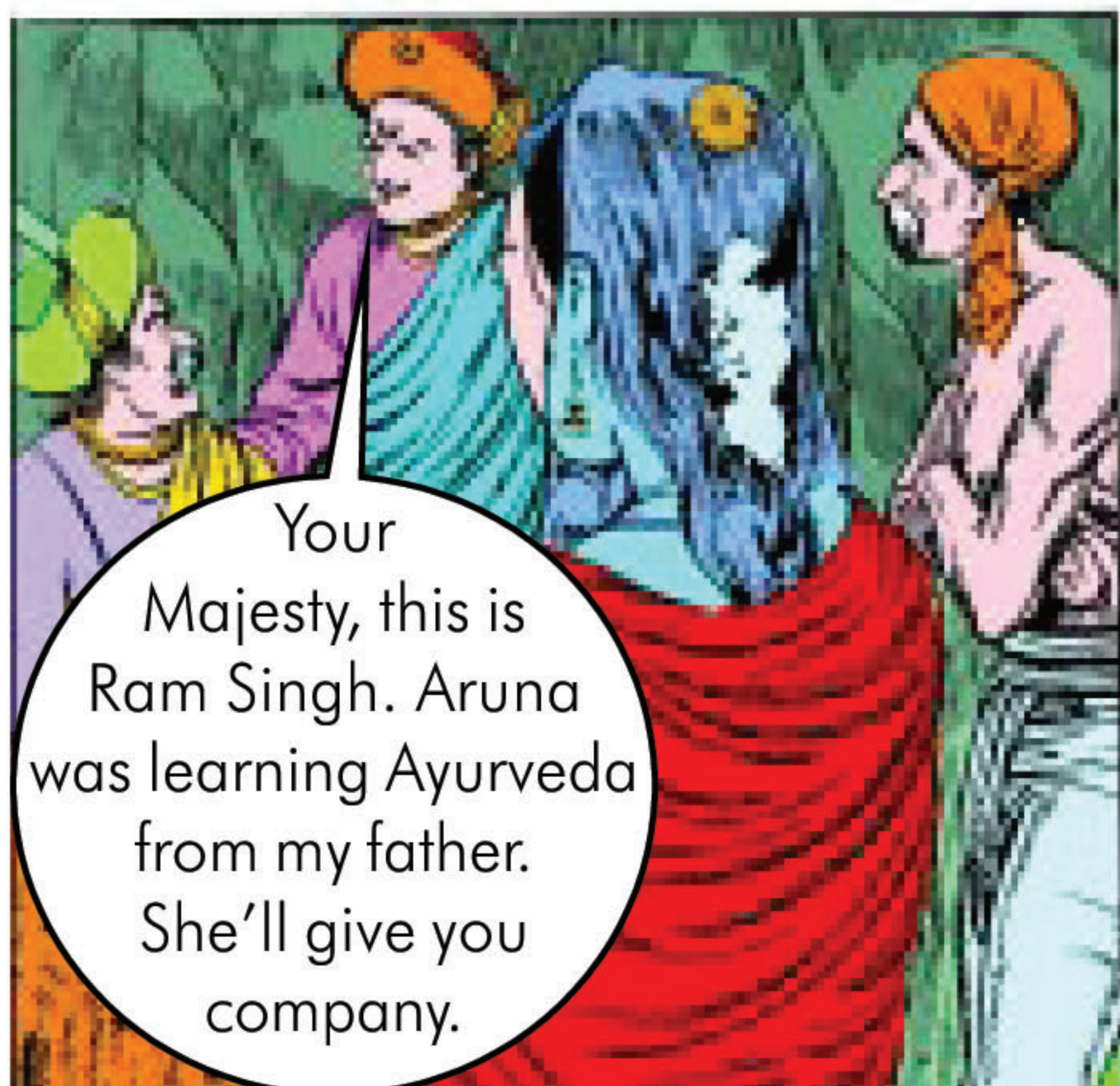
I shall go back to the capital to watch the situation. Ram Singh will look after your safety. Ram Singh!



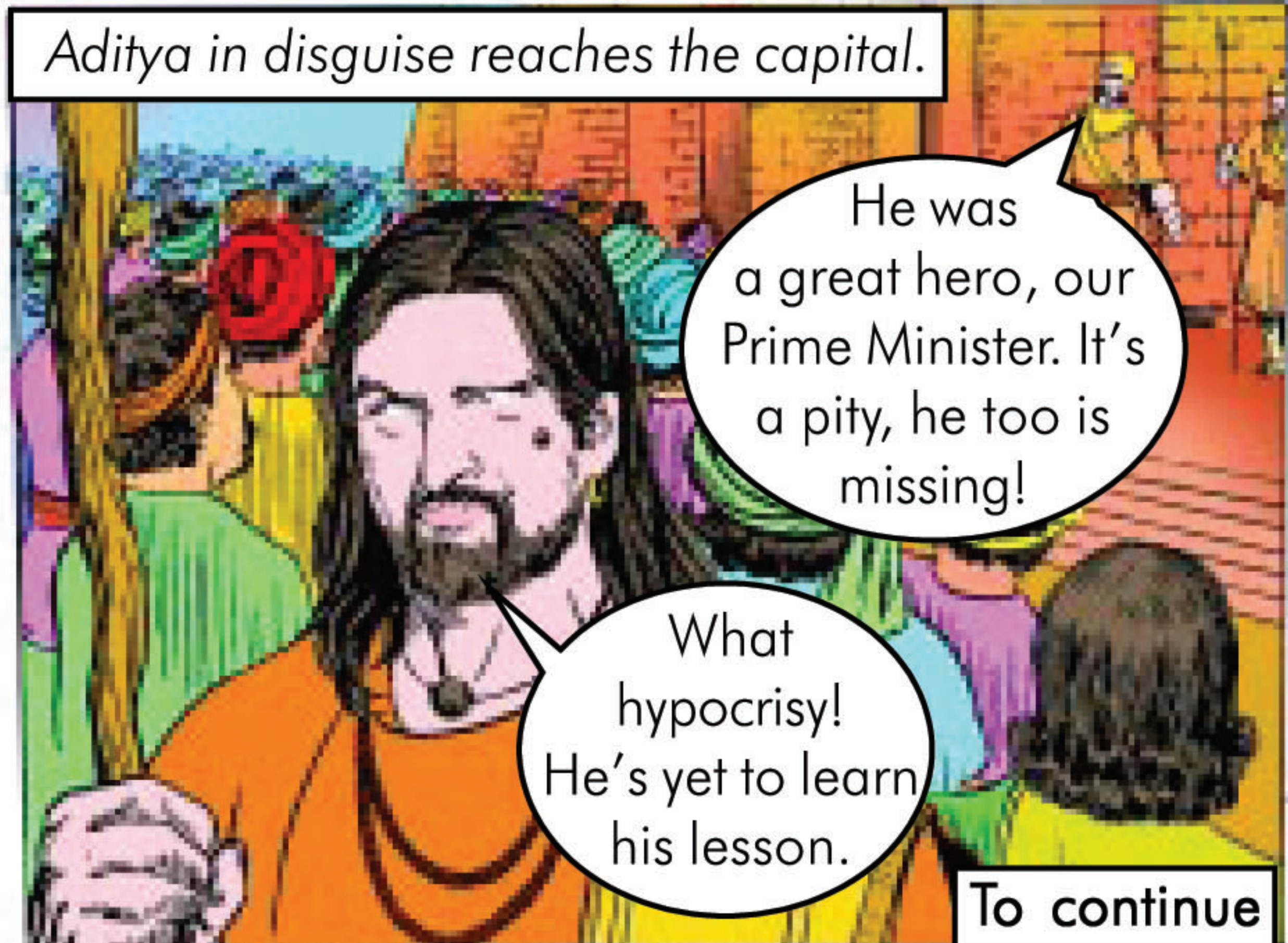
Ram Singh enters.

Aruna is already here.

Come, we'll meet His Majesty.



Your Majesty, this is Ram Singh. Aruna was learning Ayurveda from my father. She'll give you company.



Aditya in disguise reaches the capital.

He was a great hero, our Prime Minister. It's a pity, he too is missing!

What hypocrisy! He's yet to learn his lesson.

To continue



The clever crow

*I*n the jungles of Dandakaranya lived Budhi the crow. She was not only intelligent but accomplished: she sang and danced very well, indeed.

One day, Budhi was nibbling away at a juicy piece of meat when Siyara the fox came that way. He saw the piece Budhi held in her beak. He wanted it at any cost.

He approached Budhi. “Budhi, I hear that you’re a great singer! Why don’t you sing a song for me?”

‘Hmm... My granny has told me of a time when this Siyara’s grand uncle conned her out of a piece of meat with a similar trick. But I’ll show him!’ decided smart Budhi.

She shifted the meat to her claws and turned to Siyara with a sweet smile. “Of course, I’ll sing for you.” And her

throaty voice cawed out in full force. Siyara was forced to listen to it.

But he would not give up so easily. ‘That meat must come to me,’ he thought. He turned to the crow: “That was great! I’ve heard that you’re a great dancer, too. I’d love to see you cha-cha!”

‘Cha-cha indeed!’ thought Budhi with a snicker.

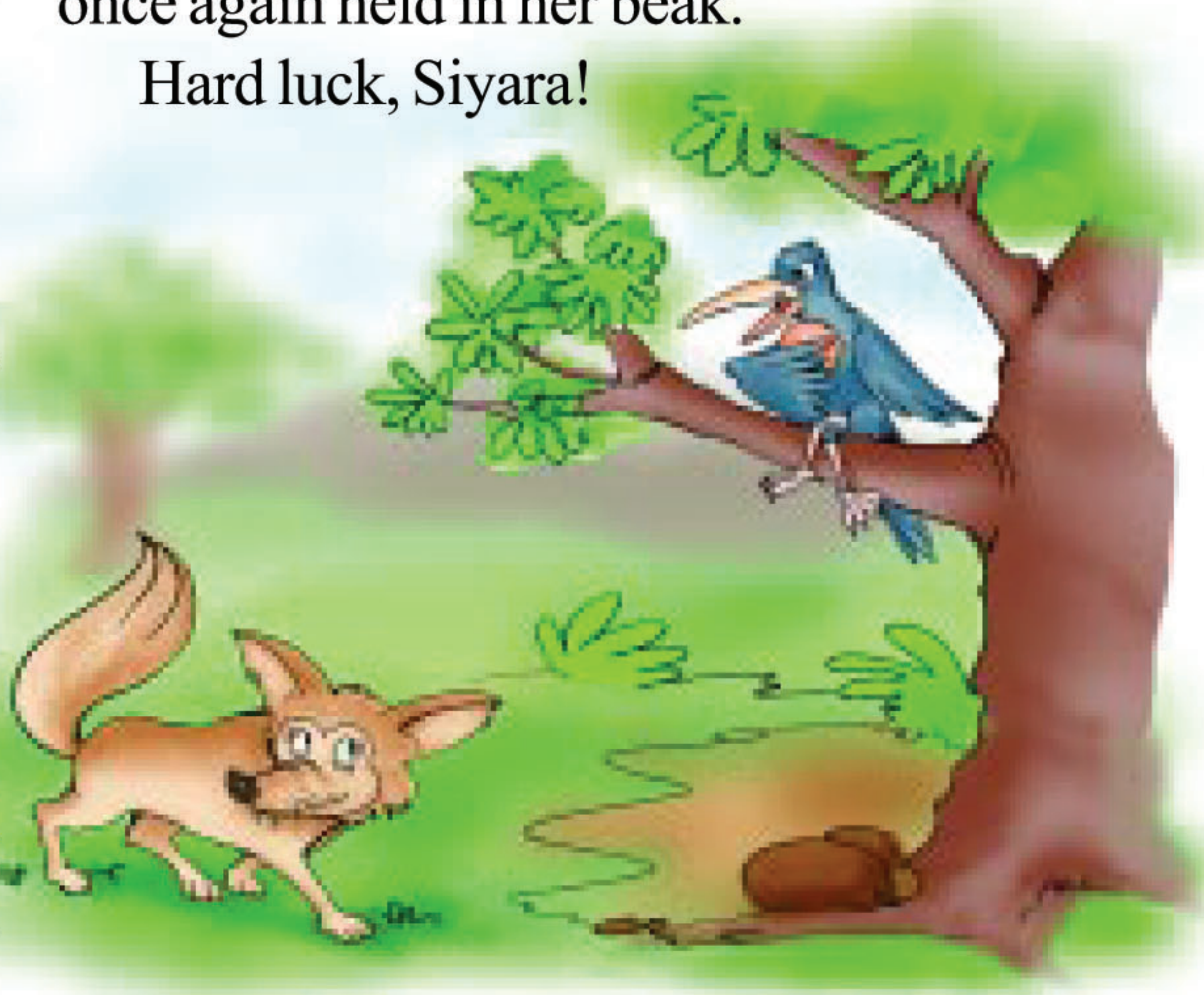
Now she transferred the meat to her beak and did a jolly jig.

Siyara was surprised at Budhi’s resourcefulness. But he was not ready to give up yet. He said, “Tell me, can you sing and dance at the same time?”

By now Budhi was sick of Siyara’s silly strategies. Again, carefully clutching the meat in her claws, she said: “Dear Siyara, thanks for the compliments. But, you see, I’m very hungry. Let me grab a bite and then I can entertain you to your heart’s content.”

She then flew away with the meat once again held in her beak.

Hard luck, Siyara!



17. Krishna to the rescue of Pandavas

By now Krishna's valour and prowess remained unquestioned. About this time, the Pandava prince Yudhishtira was preparing to perform the Rajasuya yagna. At Bhishma's suggestion, the first offering of the ritual tray was made to Krishna.

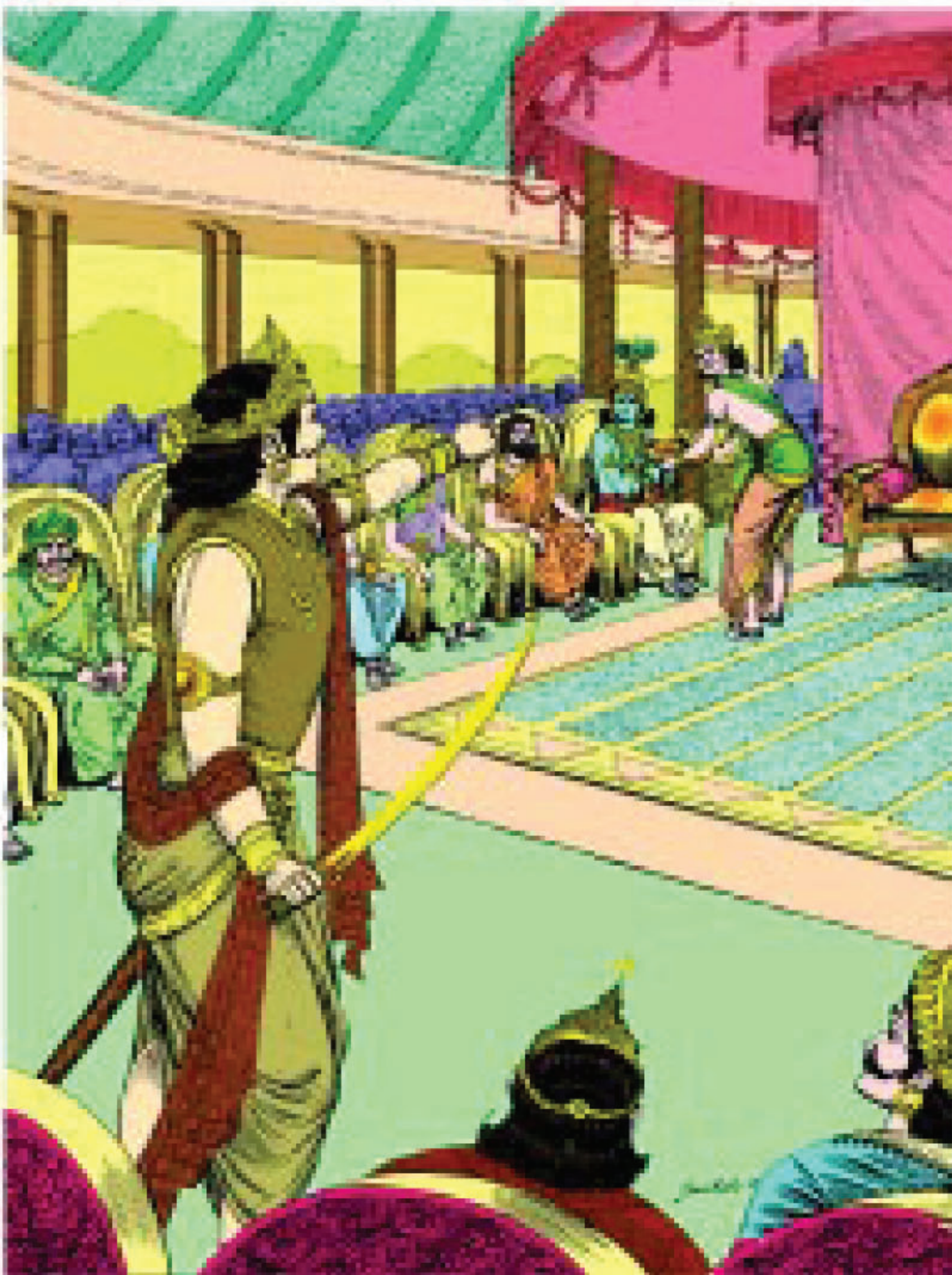
At this Sishupala, who was present there, got up and protested. He drew his sword and threatened to kill Krishna

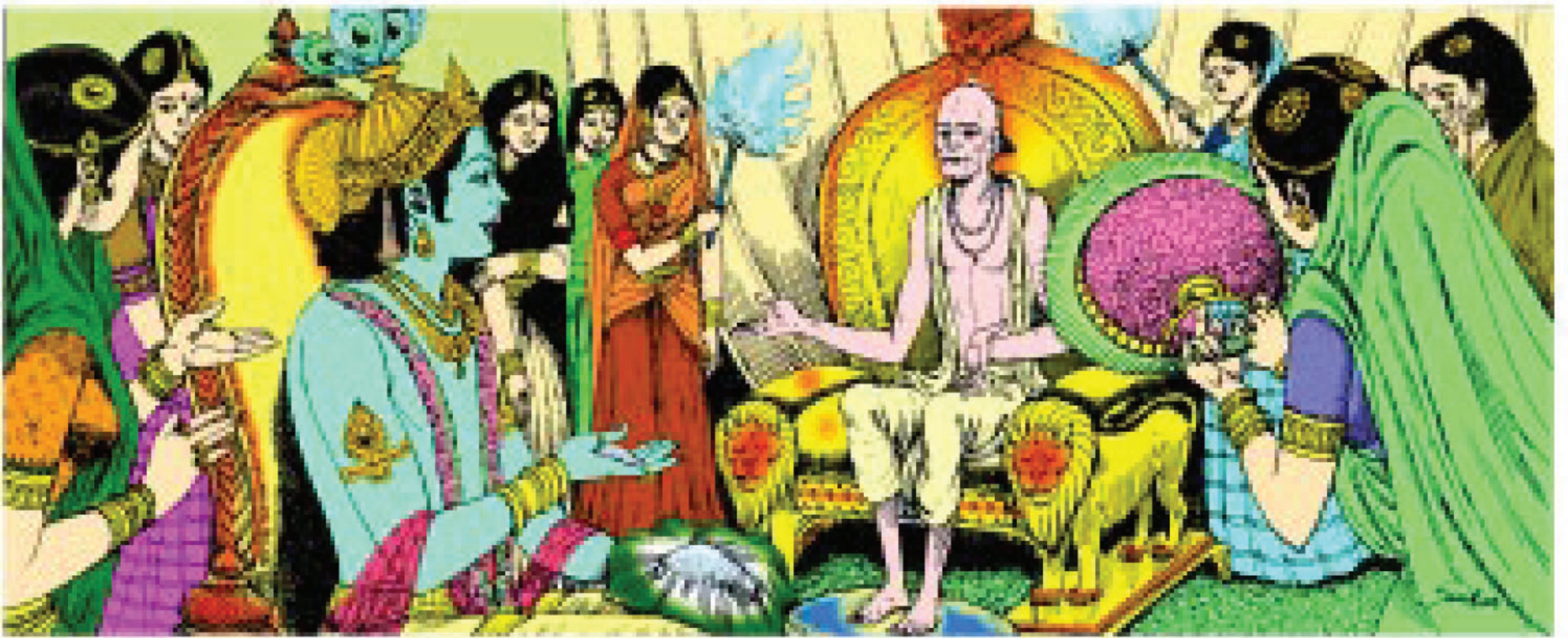
and the Pandavas. "Krishna is a thief and hails from a low caste. How can he be given this honour when so many others worthier than him are present?" he demanded.

By this time, Sishupala's misdemeanours and crimes had crossed one hundred. Krishna was expected to tolerate him only till now. He went into a rage and cut his head off with the Sudarshan chakra.

Krishna had a bosom childhood friend called Sudama. They had been classmates at the gurukul of sage Sandipani. However, as they grew up, they had each gone their separate ways and lost touch with each other.

Sudama was very poor. Sometimes he was hard put to feed his numerous children. Fed up with the hunger and poverty she faced daily, Sudama's wife one day said: "You say you were a classmate of Krishna and that he loves you very much. He is a great king now. Why don't you go and ask him for some help? Surely, if he knows what a difficult time you're going through he will certainly help you!"





After a lot of hesitation, Sudama decided to go to Krishna for help and so he set out for Dwaraka. His wife had given him a handful of beaten rice in a little bundle as a gift for Krishna since she had heard that he liked beaten rice.

Krishna was in his palace with his queens when Sudama arrived. Krishna espied Sudama from a distance and ran out to welcome him. He was much delighted to see Sudama. He welcomed him warmly and gave him a place of honour at his court. Sudama was equally delighted to find that his friend had not forgotten him and the two happily talked of the olden days and recounted many stories of what Krishna did as a naughty little boy. Krishna then spotted the bundle Sudama was carrying and was curious to know what it contained. Sudama felt ashamed to display his humble gift in the midst of Krishna's wealth and tried to hide it saying, "Oh, it's nothing!"

But Krishna insisted on taking it whatever it might be. He opened the

bundle and eagerly ate the beaten rice. Sudama was so happy to see Krishna enjoying his company, he forgot the real reason that had taken him to Dwaraka. In any case he was reluctant to mar the visit by asking for help from his friend. So he left Krishna's palace loaded with gifts. He walked home with his head full of happy memories of his visit. As he neared his home, he suddenly realised that he had not done what he set out to do and wondered what excuses he would give to his wife.

As he got home, Sudama rubbed his eyes in wonder. Where his humble hut once stood there was a grand mansion. His wife and children tumbled out of the big house in their eagerness to show themselves to him, as they were now dressed in fine clothes and rich jewels. When Sudama realised that Krishna had understood his problems even without his having to tell him, and had magically created the house and all that wealth for him, his heart filled with gratitude and devotion for his friend.

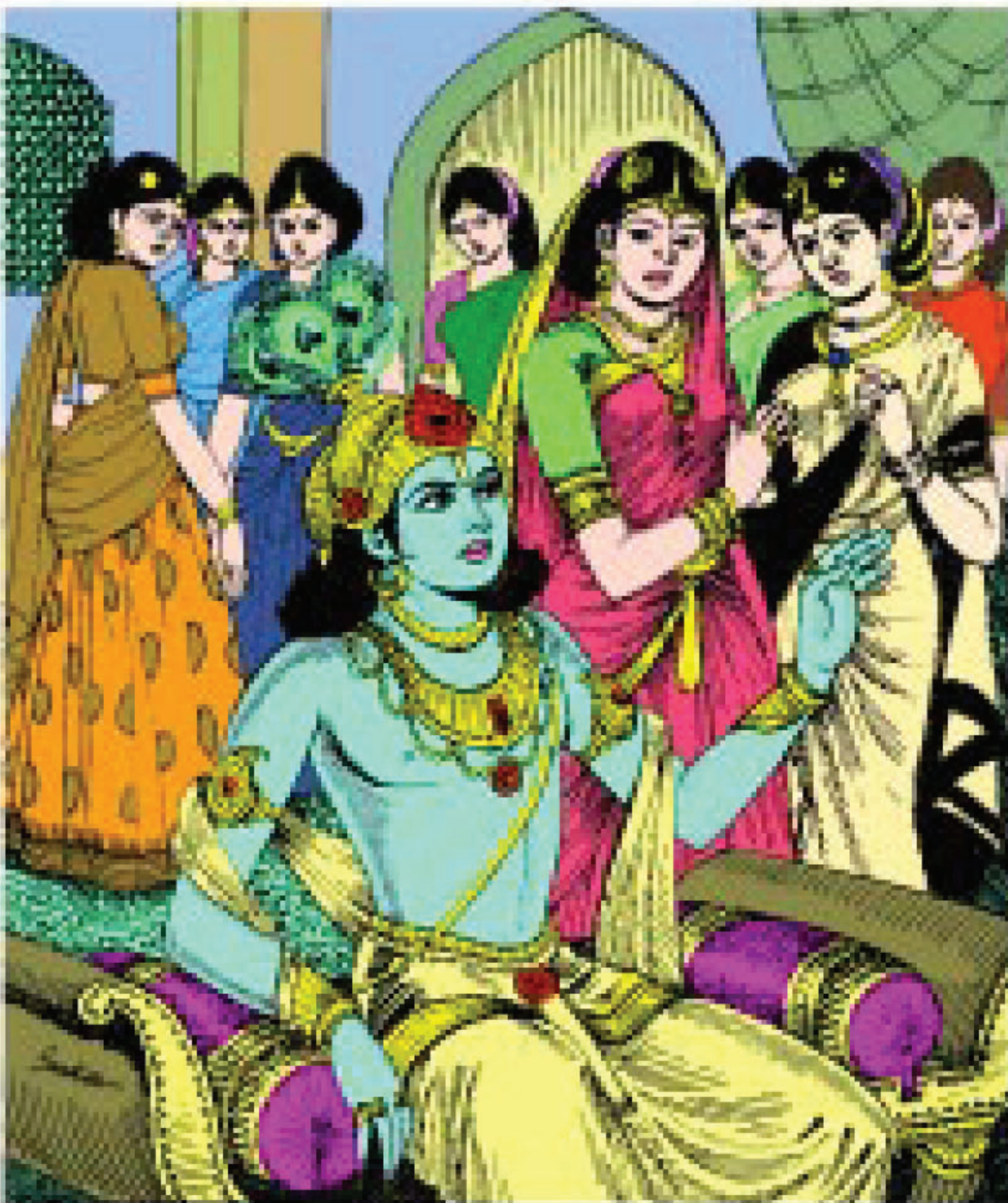
The Pandavas were Krishna's kin and they had had a beautiful palace built by the divine architect, Maya. It was one of the wonders of those days and full of deceptive illusions. Everyone came to see and marvel at it. Duryodhana, too, was taken by wonder as he went round the palace. At one place he thought he was about to step on water and he walked pulling up his flowing dress. At another place, he stepped onto what he thought was a fine carpet and found himself falling into a pool of water. Draupadi, who was watching all this, burst into laughter and Duryodhana, feeling completely humiliated, vowed to humiliate her in turn when an opportunity arose.

Shakuni was Duryodhana's

maternal uncle. He found the Kaurava prince seething in anger after the incident and suggested that he invited Yudhishthira to a game of dice. Gambling with dice was a favourite royal pastime and Yudhishthira was much addicted to the game. Shakuni had a pair of magic dice which would show whatever number he had in mind as he threw it and he told Duryodhana that he would win every time and, by getting Yudhishthira to gamble away all his possessions, he could have his revenge on Draupadi.

Yudhishthira readily accepted Duryodhana's invitation. But try as he might, Yudhishthira found that luck did not favour him and he lost throw after throw. The more he lost, the more he

seemed keen to gamble and bet his possessions one after the other till he had lost all of them—his kingdom, then brothers, even himself, and finally Draupadi. This was the chance Duryodhana and his brothers were waiting for. Duhshasana pulled Draupadi into the open hall and tried to humiliate her. He pulled at her sari in an attempt to disrobe her. Finding her five warrior husbands unable to protect her, Draupadi closed her eyes and prayed to Krishna. Krishna was in Dwaraka when he heard Draupadi's prayers. He immediately uttered the word '*akshaya*' and the sari that Duhshasana was pulling at



just grew in unending length. The more he pulled at it, the more it grew while Draupadi's sari remained draped over her shoulders. Finally Duhshasana had to give up his effort. Draupadi's modesty was saved.

The result of the gambling match was that the Pandavas had to leave Indraprastha and go away to live in exile for twelve years and then spend another year in hiding without being discovered by the Kauravas. If they were found, they would have to live in exile for another twelve years. The Pandavas were honour bound to accept these terms and sadly set off from their kingdom to spend years in exile.

Karna, one of Duryodhana's staunchest supporters, was actually Kunti's son and thus the Pandavas' elder brother. When Kunti was young, the sage Duravasa was pleased with her for serving him well and gave her a boon that she could have a child by any god.

The young Kunti was very curious and at once thought of Surya, the sun god, and chanted the *mantra* that the sage had taught her. She then gave birth to a beautiful baby boy who was born with golden earrings and a golden armour. As she was still unmarried, Kunti placed the baby in a basket and floated it down the river. The charioteer



Radhe and his wife found the baby and brought him up as their own son. The baby grew up to be Karna and joined Duryodhana in his fight with the Pandavas. Duryodhana crowned him the King of Khandesh and treated him like an elder brother. Karna, who had suffered many insults at the hands of the Pandavas, was only too keen to prove himself to be a match to them, especially Arjuna who was regarded as the most skilful archer and warrior in the world.

Twelve years of exile passed. Now the Pandavas had to find a place where they could live incognito for a year. They decided to spend the time at the court of Virata, the King of Matsya. While Yudhishtira became a companion to the

king, Bhima took up the job of a cook at the palace. Draupadi decided to serve the queen as a maid calling herself Sairandhri. Arjuna took on the role of a dance teacher called Brihannala, while Nakula and Sahadeva looked after the cattle and the royal stable.

Subhadra, Krishna's sister, was married to Arjuna and they had a son called Abhimanyu. When Abhimanyu was still in Subhadra's womb, Arjuna was one day telling her the secret of penetrating the Wheel formation on a battlefield. But before he could tell her how one could come out of it, Krishna came in and asked Arjuna why he was talking about such things to a princess who had been delicately brought up, and led him away. Abhimanyu was listening

all the time he was in his mother's womb, and this lesson remained incomplete with great consequences in the Kurukshetra war which was soon to take place.

The Pandavas completed their year of living incognito successfully and now the rivals—the Kauravas and Pandavas—got ready for the great war. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna went to seek Krishna's help at one and the same time. Krishna was sleeping. So Arjuna settled down at Krishna's feet while Duryodhana took a seat near his head, and both patiently waited for him to wake up.

When Krishna woke up, his eyes first fell on Arjuna and then he noticed Duryodhana. When he was told what they wanted, he said he personally would join one side and all his army would fight on the other side. He also said he would not take up arms or take part in the battle in any way. He asked Duryodhana and Arjuna to make their choice—him or his army. As he had set eyes on Arjuna first, he gave the first turn to Arjuna. And he, promptly chose him saying whichever side Krishna was on, that side would gain. Duryodhana, on the other hand, was happy that he got the entire Yadava army to fight on his side.

(To continue)



THE GREATEST EVER VANISHING TRICK

*I*t was a fine day. Off the coast of Philadelphia, the sea was calm and unruffled. A ship with all its crew on board was anchored some distance away from the harbour.

All of a sudden something most extraordinary happened!

Volleys of green luminous mist engulfed the solitary ship. It was a sort of strange light. Then, believe it or not, the vessel gradually became invisible and clean disappeared!

How did it vanish out into nothingness? Where did it go? Did it sink to the bottom of the sea?

Some minutes later, yet another fantastic event took place! On the sea near Norfolk, nearly five hundred miles away from Philadelphia, the very ship along with its crew was reported to have made its appearance. Was it an apparition? Then it disappeared from Norfolk and reappeared at Philadelphia. After that it again went out of sight and appeared once more on the sea at Norfolk. This

incredible process went on for some time.

How could a whole ship disappear from one place and appear at another almost at the same time? Was a magician performing any vanishing tricks?

No. It was an alleged top-secret experiment, conducted by the United States Navy in 1943. In this experiment, which came to be known as the Philadelphia Experiment, a ship was

rendered invisible and teleported from one place to another. One Mr. Carlos M. Allende, also known as Carl Allen, claimed to have watched this experiment from another ship. The unbelievable incident, according to him, was also reported in a newspaper in Philadelphia.

Later, he recalled what he saw happen to the experimental ship called *USS Eldridge* - DE 173, in 1943 thus: "I watched the air all around the ship turn slightly, even so slightly, darker than all the other air.. I saw, after a few minutes, a foggy green mist arise like a thin cloud. I watched thereafter, the DE



173 became rapidly invisible to human eyes.”

After this unusual experiment, which was supposedly a success, there followed, it is said, terrible and bizarre side effects. A good number of the ship's crew died. Others went mad. Some of them even continued to experience invisibility afterwards. Once in a small hotel by the dock in Philadelphia, a number of crew caused an uproar when they suddenly vanished. According to Carlos Allende, a newspaper of the region reported this incident.

He later clarified that though he was not a witness to the teleportation of the ship from one place to another, he had read of the happening in a newspaper in Philadelphia. He also gave names of other witnesses who could in some way confirm his story. Unfortunately, the identity of the papers he mentioned has

not been established so far. Similarly, the true identity of Carlos M. Allende was never known. Many sought to meet him and interview him. But he, believed to have five different names, remained “as elusive as the Scarlet Pimpernel”. Only very few had an opportunity to speak to him.

In fact, the story of the Philadelphia Experiment is based largely on information contained in two letters written in 1956 by Carlos Allende to Dr. Morris Ketchum Jessup, a young and dynamic scientist and a man of varied interests. In the course of his research, Dr. Jessup had hit upon a principle by which it was possible to make physical objects invisible. He said that it was from a theory of the great scientist, Albert Einstein (picture on facing page), that he had formulated the principle.

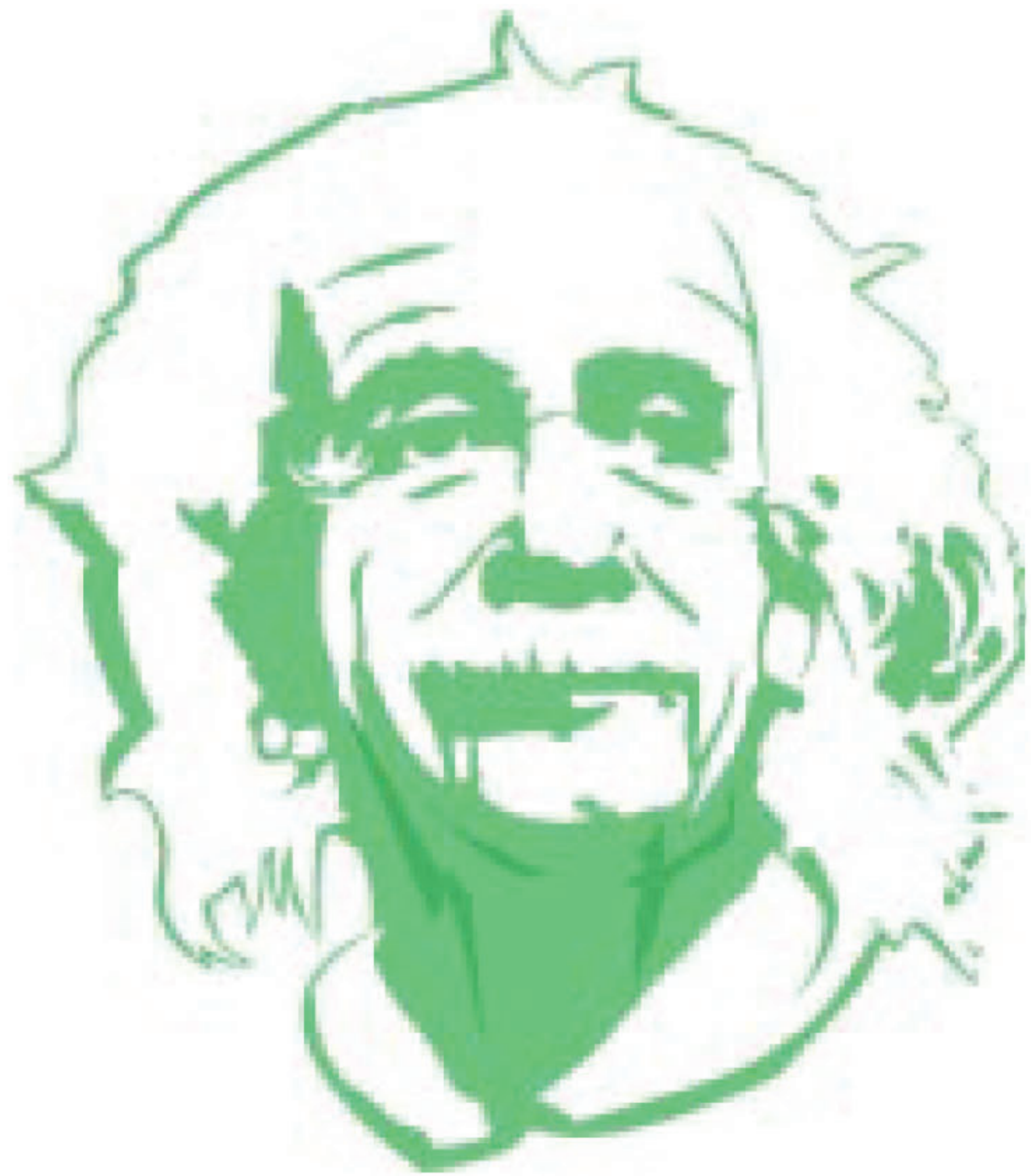


Dr. Jessup claimed that he had passed the process he had evolved to the U. S. Navy. The Navy on the other hand tried it out on the said ship.

Soon after a newspaper flashed the startling revelation made by Dr. Jessup, one evening in 1959, he was found dead in his estate wagon in Florida. Did he commit suicide, fearing harassment, as was he under oath never to disclose the secret experiment? Or, as some think, was he murdered, in order to be silenced for ever, because he had refused to abandon his research?

This astounding story has been told by various authors, George Langelaan in his book, *Terrifying Facts* and Charles Berlitz and William Moore in theirs, *The Philadelphia Experiment*. But whether this bizarre happening really took place is not known with certainty. All the authentic papers concerning the subject have been probably kept well guarded in the Navy's top-secret chambers.

The Navy, on the other hand, has



reportedly denied that its research wing had ever carried out such experiments on invisibility. "In view of the present scientific knowledge, ONR (Office of Naval Research) scientists do not believe that such an experiment could be possible except in the realm of science fiction."

Then, is the Philadelphia Experiment a fantastic hoax of our time? We do not know!

Honour conferred on oneself!

* Reader **Bhagyaraj** of Yercaud wants to know whether there is any historical origin for the idiom “a feather in one’s cap”.

Long, long ago, hunters in Europe used to add a feather to their cap whenever they killed a wild animal. This custom was imitated by soldiers six or seven centuries ago to indicate their personal ‘achievements’ on the battlefield. They would pluck a feather from the cap of their adversary lying dead on the ground and put it on their cap. This tradition travelled with them to North and South America when immigrants from Europe settled down there. The native American Indians picked up the custom, though in the last three hundred years, hunters and soldiers have stopped the practice of wearing feathers collected from their ‘enemies’. The American Indians, however, continue to wear feathers on their caps as a symbol of bravery.

* Reader **Bhavanishankar** of Mandya writes: *When the election results were being published in newspapers last May, it was stated about a successful candidate that it was not a cakewalk for him. What does it mean?*

There is a popular competition in some of the countries in South America where a cake is placed in the centre of a table and the competing couples are required to get on to the table and either walk or dance around the cake. The couple who is adjudged best for elegance wins a prize—of course, the cake! A cakewalk is normally considered an easy task. What the newspapers meant was, the candidate faced stiff competition from his nearest rival and his success was thus not as easy as a cakewalk.

* *What is meant by the idiom “go off at half-cock”? asks **Jyotiranjana Biswal** of Durgapur.*

The reference is to the cock of a gun which is drawn back half-way, meaning that it is only partially prepared to shoot. And if the gun goes off, it will be unsuccessful because the gun has been activated before all the preparations for shooting have been made.

Let us know



★ **I am reminded of the expression “as blind as a bat”. Are bats really blind?**

- *Ranjit Sahni, Chandigarh*

They are not. As a matter of fact, they can see quite well. Just because they fly mostly at night, when human beings cannot see anything in the dark, people think that bats also become blind at night. For that matter, they need not see when they are flying. They make use of a strange radar system to avoid bumping into objects in their way. They send out high-pitched sounds (which human beings cannot detect) which hit anything in their path and bounce back to the mammals, which are then able to pinpoint the location of such objects.

★ **What is the origin of the expression “hat trick”?**

- *Muthu Kumaresan, Palayamkottai*

It originated from cricket. When the same bowler took three wickets in a row in as many deliveries, it was called a hat trick. In the 1880s, such a feat was recognised by presenting a hat to the bowler. Though no gift of hats is made these days, the expression has gained usage to denote any achievement three times in a row, in sports and other activities.

★ **How many bones have we in our body?**

- *Kalpana Bose, Darjeeling.*

A normal adult will have as many as 206 individual bones in his or her body. A quarter of them are located in the feet and ankles, which together have some 26 bones. So, on two pairs of legs, we have more than fifty bones which account for a quarter.

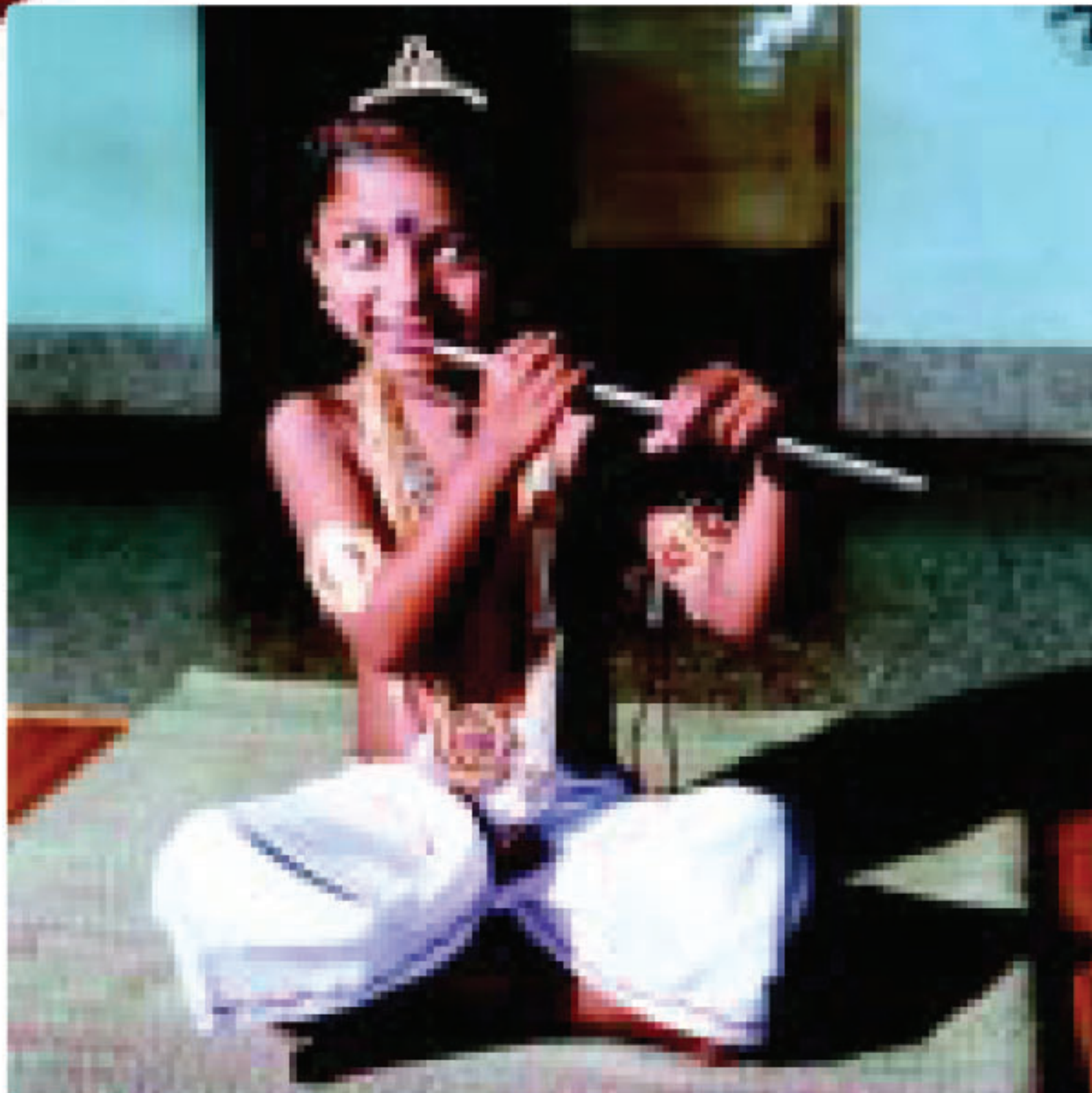
This may interest you!

There are a million species of insects in the world. However, only one type of food made by them is fit for human consumption. Which? Guess! Honey, of course!



*Click
a caption*

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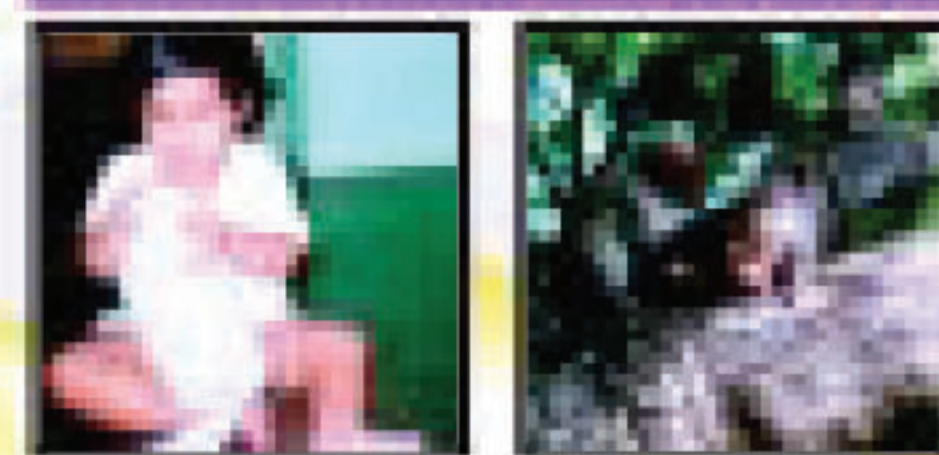
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TAMILNADU TOURISM - WHERE TIMELESS SPLENDOURS AWAIT!



You will also meet some great survivors!!

*T*his southern state has a way of rejuvenating your spirits....

Start off by a visit to Mudumalai sanctuary to behold some wild tuskers, keeping a reverential distance from the ferocious big cat. Simply marvel at some sleek, feathered songster at Vedanthangal sanctuary or grudge at the grace of a sambar deer at Anamalai.

Breath-taking artistry awaits you at the Mamallapuram shore temple, built in 7th century A.D. Move on to the mystifying paintings at Pudukotai, the archaeologist's delight.



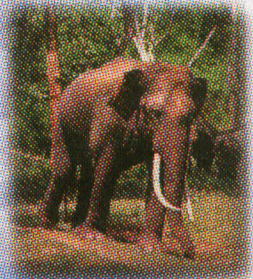
Get tempted by the rustle of the luscious Kancheepuram silk against your skin-an edifice of silk weaving which goes back to 3rd century B.C. Allow revelations to dawn on you as you scrutinize the rock-art called 'Arjuna's Penance' or while sitting by the Kalamkari painter of Thanjavur. Resist yourself

from the 'Panchamukhavaadyam' (five-faced percussion instrument in

metal and hide) a rare instrument played at the Thanjavur temple.

Treat yourself into the intricacies of a simple hair ornament 'Jadanaagam', brilliant and the pinnacle of sophistication. Envy the potter's fingers as the terracotta figure of a folk deity takes form, in Salem, the steel city of Tamilnadu.

As you cool your heels off at some tranquil hillstation like Ooty or Kodai you almost figure out - your soul has been satisfied! May be you can call it a kind of salvation, designed by the perfect partnership of nature and heritage....



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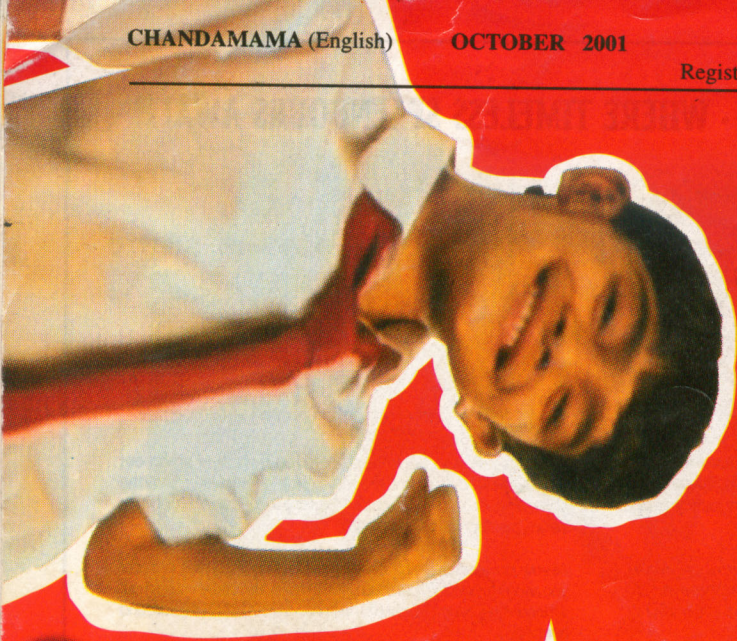
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